



Meeting of the Academic Strategies Committee

July 12, 2017

Telephonic and Journey (Room 104), Memorial Union

Oregon State University

Corvallis, Oregon

## MINUTES

**Committee Members Present:** Mike Bailey, Rani Borkar, Michele Longo Eder (*vice chair*), Ed Feser (*ex officio*), and Paul Kelly (*chair*)

**Other Trustees Present:** Mark Baldwin

**University Staff Present:** Jennifer Almquist, Susan Capalbo, Susie Brubaker-Cole, Debbie Colbert, Becca Gose, Patti Snopkowski, and Marcia Stuart

### 1. Call to Order/Roll/Declaration of a Quorum

Committee Chair Paul Kelly called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m., asked the assistant board secretary to call the roll, and noted a quorum.

### 2. Provost's Report

Provost and Executive Vice President Ed Feser reported that Toni Doolen was named dean of the College of Education for a two-year appointment following an unsuccessful national search. He expressed confidence in Doolen's ability to provide leadership for the college, adding that she built credibility with faculty while serving as chair of the search. Feser said that Doolen will also continue to serve as dean of the University Honors College.

Next, Feser reported that the 2017 legislative session ended with more support for Oregon's public universities than initially projected, although the increase was still less than requested. With more state funding than planned, staff are now beginning the process of thinking about what adjustments can be made to the operating budget. Feser stressed that the additional funds will not offer an opportunity to make new investments; rather, the money will be applied to reducing anticipated cuts. Kelly asked what portion of the additional funds would be distributed to OSU, and Feser replied that final numbers were not yet available. He added that early estimates by Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration and Chief Financial Officer Mike Green and Director of Budget and Fiscal Planning Sherm Bloomer suggested that the expenditure reduction could be closer to \$11M rather than the \$20M initially projected. Trustee Mike Bailey asked whether allocations would be made to the universities following the Higher Education Coordinating Commission's formula, and Feser confirmed they would.

Feser also reported that staff are working on a presentation for the October meeting that will provide an overview of changes to academic programs over the past decade and present a strategic vision for the future. Additionally, the presentation will address connections between academic program offerings and the university's financial bottom line. Next, Feser

said that he and President Ray were in the process of forming an Admissions and Attendance Task Force to provide guidance on the university's admissions and attendance policies for prospective students with prior criminal histories. He said the task force's charge would include reviewing OSU's policies and practices related to the application review, admission, and attendance of undergraduate and graduate students with prior criminal histories; benchmarking OSU's policies and practices against peer institutions; and recommending any changes. The task force will also review the alignment of policies and practices governing prospective students with those governing misconduct of students after matriculation. Feser noted that the timing of the task force's work will depend on the ability to consult with various stakeholders, including the Board of Trustees and Faculty Senate, and will be relative to the admissions cycle. General Counsel Becca Gose noted there were also external stakeholders who had expressed interest in providing input. Secretary Debbie Colbert added that it is envisioned that, as the provost finalizes the plans for the process, there will be points at which discussion occurs with the Board. Feser concurred stating he envisions an opportunity early in the process for the Board to provide input and ask questions and again when the task force has finalized their recommendations. Trustee Michele Longo Eder asked for clarity on the breadth of the task force's charge relative to admissions policies and practices. Feser said the intent of the task force was to focus specifically on the university's admissions and attendance policies for prospective students with prior criminal histories and not admissions policies and practices overall. He added that, while there is not presently a plan to undertake a comprehensive review of admissions policies, staff could present to trustees an overview of current policies, particularly as they relate to student success. Colbert noted that student success would be a focus at the October meeting and suggested that would be a good time to weave in a discussion of admissions.

### 3. Consent Agenda

#### a. Minutes of the June 1, 2017 Academic Strategies Committee Meeting

With a minor correction to the minutes duly noted, a motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2017, Academic Strategies Committee meeting as amended. The motion carried.

### 4. Education/Discussion Items

#### a. Student Affairs Division: Mission, Programmatic Areas, Key Metrics

Chair Kelly introduced the item as part of the ongoing conversations the committee has been having with Vice Provost for Student Affairs Susie Brubaker-Cole as part of their broad oversight responsibilities for student life and conduct and educational quality. He then asked Brubaker-Cole to provide an overview of how OSU is delivering on the mission of Student Affairs. Brubaker-Cole said that her presentation would build on the committee's May 2017 discussion of alcohol and other drugs. She shared that her presentation would address questions about how OSU tracks, assesses, and monitors the broad spectrum of non-academic, student-life areas. Brubaker-Cole added that the aim was to share with the committee the processes the division uses to drive work and monitor effectiveness so that trustees have an opportunity to provide guidance on the management approaches and quality control processes that guide OSU's student affairs work.

Brubaker-Cole said that there are many factors that collectively create the conditions for student success and enable students to achieve the goal of graduation. She offered an illustration of the overall student success endeavors at OSU, noting that efforts are

located at various points in the organization from specific academic programs to campus-wide units such as the Division of Undergraduate Studies. Brubaker-Cole said that Student Affairs operates with the mission to enhance learning and strengthen the educational experience of OSU students through primarily co-curricular programs and services. She added that this includes undergraduate and graduate students, with a focus on site-based students in Corvallis, Newport, and Bend, although some services are available for Ecampus students. Next, Brubaker-Cole described the five domains of learning and service overseen by Student Affairs, adding that these areas were conceptual and not reflective of the division's programmatic structure. The five domains are the broad areas of coverage within Student Affairs and include health and well-being, diversity and global consciousness, career discovery and development, community and civic engagement, and personal and leadership development. She then provided a list of departments in Student Affairs, noting that those listed are for Corvallis only, with Ecampus supported by some functions and OSU-Cascades engaged in building a student affairs enterprise that would contain many similar functions in an organizational structure that will work for the campus. Trustee Mike Bailey asked about Brubaker-Cole's oversight, and she confirmed that she is the head of student affairs for Oregon State University, adding that there is a similar role at OSU-Cascades for direct campus oversight, although the position is configured differently than it is in Corvallis. Following Brubaker-Cole's overview of the functions within Student Affairs, Kelly asked how the configuration had changed over time. Brubaker-Cole described the portfolio of student affairs across the country as stable; however, she said the functions of student care and threat assessment are new at OSU and at other institutions in the past several years. She added that the Office of Student Affairs Research, Evaluation, and Planning; Corvallis Community Relations; and the Human Services Resource Center were also added to the portfolio within the past ten years. Bailey asked whether there was anything else Brubaker-Cole was considering as part of a long-term plan, and she noted that while no new functional areas were planned, the division was in the process of evolving internally to better meet the changing needs of students.

Next, Brubaker-Cole introduced the five principal methods Student Affairs is using to measure programmatic quality and impact as well to track emergent needs and trends in areas of student life: large-scale student surveys, student participation data and impact analysis, periodic departmental reviews, professional accreditations, and regular department-level assessment. In discussing the large-scale student surveys OSU administers, she also noted that most of the surveys have approval through OSU's Institutional Review Board and can be used for research. Brubaker-Cole said that one weakness in the division's current portfolio is a survey to collect comprehensive career placement data. Eder asked about student participation in the surveys that were used to track emergent needs and trends in key areas of student life. Brubaker-Cole said that students are not required to participate, but expressed her confidence that all of the results have an adequate response rate and are reflective of the overall student population. At the conclusion of her discussion about measuring programmatic quality and impact, Brubaker-Cole noted that every department within the division submits quarterly assessment reports on outcomes relating to departmental and divisional goals, which supports a local and organic process of change and improvement. She added that in the last regional, institutional accreditation, Student Affairs received a commendation for these assessment processes.

Brubaker-Cole then introduced two areas that emerged as important when looking at data because they are of OSU and national concern in student success and wellbeing.

She added that focusing on two areas in particular would provide an opportunity to see how Student Affairs looks at student surveys and programmatic data in order to adjust, adapt, and improve services and programs. First, she focused on care and assistance for students who find themselves in difficulty, citing the process as an example of how the division has used service usage data to adapt to a changing landscape and student population. Brubaker-Cole said the Office of the Dean of Student Life began tracking the frequency and type of referrals and contacts in 2013-14. At that time, the office saw 117 referrals in a year, and in 2015, the number was 166. That increase led to the creation of processes to address the needs of students and the campus community. As the number of referrals has continued to increase, these improved processes that engage experts across divisions have helped improve supports for students. Additionally, Brubaker-Cole reported that data about the type and frequency of student cases has informed new policies and practices, from creating homelessness expertise in the Human Services Resource Center to reorganizing the Office of the Dean of Student Life.

Next, Brubaker-Cole focused on the example of student mental health. She said that this is a major area of concern across the country with increases in the number of cases of mental health in student populations, earlier onset of major mental health illness, and more serious cases being seen in university counseling centers. She then provided a snapshot of mental health at OSU using data from the Healthy Minds Survey, which is administered every two years. Eder said that she had been surprised by the high numbers and asked about how representative the results were of the overall student population, noting that the data suggest a need to focus on meeting the needs of students with mental illness. Trustee Rani Borkar also asked about the sample size of the survey. Brubaker-Cole confirmed that the Healthy Minds Survey is the “gold standard” collegiate mental health study and has been validated by experts in the field. She added that OSU had a strong response rate to the survey and the sample was reflective of the university’s population. Eder also asked whether there had been any comparisons with a similar age cohort of non-college going populations, and Brubaker-Cole said she was not aware of any. In response to a question from Bailey about the university as compared to other institutions, Brubaker-Cole noted that OSU’s results are consistent with the national landscape for collegiate mental health. However, she added that one point on which OSU diverged from national trends is the rate at which students access campus mental health services, noting that OSU is approximately 10% above the national average. She said this indicates that students have confidence in Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) and the services are accessible. Next, Brubaker-Cole presented internal data about the utilization of CAPS services that showed a 60% increase over the past five years. While some of this may be due to enrollment growth, enrollment only increased 25% during the same time period suggesting that more students are availing themselves of the services provided by CAPS. She said this increase has caused some concern because the capacity of CAPS has not increased at the same rate, adding that addressing this will be a priority over the next several years. However, Brubaker-Cole reported that the average wait until a student is assigned the first appointment decreased by half from 2015-16 to 2016-17. She explained this was the result of changes made following the periodic departmental review of CAPS, which included recommendations by national experts who were involved in the external review. As a result, CAPS has implemented innovative ways to make use of limited resources, including focusing on brief treatments and leveraging technology. In response to a question by Bailey about hours at CAPS, Brubaker-Cole noted that some afterhours counseling is available by CAPS staff, but there is also a 24-hour phone line that students can call and speak to a therapist directly. Like all of CAPS services, because

this phone line is funded by student fees, it is available at no cost to students who pay those fees. Even with these positive changes, Brubaker-Cole added that the data on usage and severity of cases indicates a need to increase therapist FTE. Eder asked about possible explanations for the disparity between the number of students who self-reported mental health concerns in the Healthy Minds Survey and the number of students who access CAPS. Brubaker-Cole said one challenge is that it is difficult to know who is not accessing CAPS services; however, the Healthy Minds Survey provides insight into some of the cultural barriers students may encounter. Trustee Mark Baldwin asked whether information is available about students who self-reported mental health concerns and their participation in other activities, such as club sports. Brubaker-Cole said that information is not available because individual results are protected as confidential medical records, but she pointed to evidence that exercise can be an effective treatment for mental health concerns. She added that, as a result, the university would be piloting a program for clinicians to prescribe exercise as a part of a broader treatment program.

Brubaker-Cole concluded her report by reaffirming Student Affairs' commitment to assessing the scope, quality, and impact of programs using a diverse set of instruments and measures. She added that as OSU expands in Newport and Bend, alignment and adaptation to local context will be critical. In the discussion that followed, trustees affirmed the importance of ensuring that student mental health be a shared responsibility across the university. Kelly thanked Brubaker-Cole for her overview of the Student Affairs portfolio.

**b. Institutional Accreditation Review**

Chair Kelly introduced the item by reminding the committee that one of their responsibilities is to oversee engagement with accrediting bodies. He asked Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Susan Capalbo to provide an update on the accreditation review of the university that is underway, noting that written materials for this item were provided in TAB C.

Capalbo reported that the accreditation review will be ongoing for the next 18 months to two years in partnership with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). She said the process will be overseen by the Office of Academic Programs, Assessment, and Accreditation within Academic Affairs, adding that the Academic Strategies Committee will continue to receive regular progress reports throughout the accreditation review. Capalbo said that while accreditation is mandatory, it should be seen not as perfunctory but as complementary to the other planning that occurs at the university, such as strategic planning and academic planning, and that it should be integral to what the university does and how resources are allocated. She added that some programs at the university are also subject to separate professional accreditation.

Next, Capalbo provided an overview of the process, noting that the NWCCU recently moved from a ten-year cycle to a seven-year cycle. OSU has been involved in the new seven-year cycle since 2011-12, which includes reporting on five standards spread across years one, three, and seven. The standards comprise 114 criteria for assessment that are intended to foster excellence and encourage institutional improvement. Capalbo said the Year One report submitted in 2012 addressed Standard 1: Mission and Core Themes, the Year Three report focused on Standard 2: Resources and Capacity, and the Year Seven report will focus on Standards 3: Institutional Planning and

Implementation; 4: Effectiveness and Improvement; and 5: Mission Fulfillment, Adaptation, and Sustainability. She then provided an overview of the components included in each of the five standards. Capalbo said the NWCCU has expressed a particular focus on student success and student engagement, adding that she was pleased by Brubaker-Cole's report about the assessment efforts underway in Student Affairs.

Capalbo said that the next step will be for Provost Feser to appoint an Accreditation Core Planning Team, which will be chaired by Capalbo. She said the team will be tasked with creating the work plan and timeline for the self-study and site visit. There will also be an Accreditation Steering Committee associated with the planning team that will help prepare the self-study and educate and prepare the campus for the on-site visit. Capalbo stated that the timing of the site visit is not yet known, but the hope is that it will be in the winter or spring of 2019. The visit will involve faculty from peer institutions who will work with the NWCCU to issue recommendations to which OSU will respond.

Following the report, Kelly asked who will serve on the Accreditation Core Planning Team. Capalbo said it would include faculty and academic leadership, as well as representatives from administrative units because it is an institutional accreditation. In response to a question from Bailey about the role of the Board, Colbert said the Academic Strategies Committee will have regular reviews throughout the process. Additionally, sections of the report will be focused on governance and will require input about the Board of Trustees from the Board Office. Colbert added that there are specific engagement points dictated by the accrediting body, which may include interaction with select trustees during the site visit.

## **5. Adjournment**

With no further business proposed, Chair Paul Kelly adjourned the meeting at 3:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer M. Almquist  
Assistant Board Secretary