



Oregon State
University

The Board of Trustees of Oregon State University

Meeting of the Academic Strategies Committee

January 18, 2024

1:35 – 4:10 pm

Virtual Meeting Held via Zoom

MINUTES

Committee members present: Stephanie Bulger (*vice chair*), Maria Chávez-Haroldson, Greg Macpherson, Julie Manning (*chair*), Kirk Schueler (*ex-officio*), Inara Scott, Irem Tumer (*ex-officio*)

Committee members absent: Ed Feser (*ex-officio*)

Other trustees present: Patty Bedient, Kassy Bonanno, Karla Chambers, Susan Clark, Román Hernández, Grant Kitamura, Elise McClure, Jayathi Murthy

University staff present: Grace Atebe, Jackie Bangs, Sherm Bloomer, Kevin Dougherty, Katie Fast, Alix Gitelman, Becca Gose, Mike Green, Kurt Haapala, Jen Humphreys, Stacy Jeffries, Stephen Jenkins, Tim Jensen, Dan Larson, Wade Marcum, Paul Odenthal, Rob Odom, Shalece Rains, Larry Rodgers, Patti Snopkowski, Lisa Templeton, Irem Tumer, Scott Vignos, Steve Wuhs

Invited guests: Ryan Jensen (Brailsford & Dunlavey), Steven Richman (INTO OSU)

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

Committee Chair Julie Manning called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m. Board Secretary Jackie Bangs called the roll and verified a quorum.

2. Provost's report

a. **Status Report: Academic programs in development or review; institutional accreditation; program accreditations**

Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Senior Vice Provost Alix Gitelman provided an update on behalf of Provost and Executive Vice President Ed Feser. A summary of key topics is included below.

Gitelman noted the closeout of OSU Strategic Plan 4.0 in December 2023, with the new strategic plan – *Prosperity Widely Shared* – now in effect. She said implementation of the new seven-year plan would be a university-wide effort led by a steering committee charged and chaired by Provost Feser. Gitelman added that the Academic Strategies Committee would receive updates throughout the year, and the full board would receive in-depth annual progress reports.

Gitelman announced the transition of the Marine Studies Initiative (MSI) to the Marine and Coastal Opportunities program, a permanent academic support program housed in the Office of Academic Affairs alongside other university experiential learning programs. She expressed thanks to Dr. Jack Barth for his leadership of the MSI and the many accomplishments during his tenure.

OSU Board of Trustees

Gitelman provided an enrollment update, noting that winter registrations were up 4.5% on headcount and 5.5% on student credit hours across all locations and modalities, with undergraduate applications up 20% and registrations up 22% over this time last year.

She stressed the university's priority of reducing net cost for the lowest income students and reported that early results for the Bridge to Success program were promising, with over 400 students and families participating in a financial wellness webinar; 68% of incoming students completing a financial wellness survey; and over 300 students meeting with staff at the Center for the Advancement of Financial Education.

Gitelman also announced that OSU had awarded over \$2.3M in grants to help students with a one-time payment to close the gap between the previous account threshold of \$2200 and the new threshold of \$500. She added that OSU is exploring the development of a university-wide emergency fund for students who need short-term financial assistance.

She reported that the university would formally establish an economic development and industry relations unit in an expanded version of the Research Office under the leadership of Vice President for Research Irem Tumer.

She noted that the Administrative Modernization Program team anticipates a June 2024 implementation kickoff and had signed an engagement letter with Deloitte for an organizational change management implementation partner with near-term deliverables to include onboarding, plan development and governance.

In closing, Gitelman gave an update on collective bargaining, reporting that OSU is actively engaged in negotiations over successor agreements with three of the four OSU unions. She noted that contracts with the UAOSU (faculty union) and CGE (graduate employee union) are set to expire in June.

3. Consent agenda

a. Minutes of the October 19, 2023 Academic Strategies Committee Meeting

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Trustee Macpherson and seconded by Trustee Scott. The consent agenda was approved by all committee members in attendance.

4. Discussion items

a. Research and Innovation briefing

Vice President for Research Irem Tumer presented highlights from her annual briefing on research and innovation at OSU.

Tumer noted that OSU's new strategic plan put the university on an ambitious path with a key target to increase annual research expenditures to \$600M by 2030, starting from \$367M in FY2023 – a number that aligns with university peers without a medical school. To reach that goal, Tumer said the university would need to improve administrative structures and processes; provide additional support services for faculty and researchers to pursue large awards; and improve structures and mechanisms to increase OSU's impact through economic development, industry relations, and community engagement.

Tumer noted that the new strategic plan also prioritizes investment in selected areas of research to further elevate transdisciplinary, larger-scale, collaborative research to position OSU as a destination for students, faculty, funding agencies and more. She added that the priority areas include climate science and related solutions, clean energy technology and related solutions, robotics, and integrated health and biotechnology.

Trustee Macpherson noted that federal money is a big dollar amount and stressed the risk if, for example, there were a federal administration hostile to science. He asked if there were opportunities to diversify by adding state or industry support. Tumer acknowledged the risk; she said industry was primarily interested in workforce development but cited research opportunities with large private foundations and for international work.

Committee Chair Manning asked if there was an opportunity to optimize partnerships through the CHIPS Act. Tumer said there have been good conversations with the governor's economic and workforce development contact Vince Porter but added there was still work to be done. She mentioned two tech hubs the university is pursuing with the Economic Development Agency and two regional innovation proposals for the National Science Foundation that require 10% in matching dollars from the state.

Chair Schueler asked about a reverse incentive for collaborative research, since promotion and tenure are tied to individual publishing. Tumer said it was a real concern and there was a movement among universities to reinforce the need for change.

Trustee Chambers stressed the need to incentivize the state's investment in OSU's research engine, adding that Oregon could be the leading R&D center under the CHIPS Act. She also stressed the importance of collaborative research projects on controversial topics like forestry.

b. Internationalization and Global Engagement briefing

Deputy senior international officers Steve Wuhs and Grace Atebe presented the briefing on internationalization and global engagement. (Provost and Executive Vice President Ed Feser is OSU's senior international officer, but he was in China as a part of an effort to grow enrollments post-pandemic.) Wuhs and Atebe were also joined by Steve Richman, senior vice president for partnerships at INTO OSU.

Presenters announced the 15th anniversary of the INTO OSU joint venture in fall 2023, with statistics of note including:

- Almost 80,500 applications processed by INTO OSU
- Over 6,700 international students living alongside domestic students in OSU residence halls
- 4,445 OSU degrees earned by international students who started through INTO OSU, including 112 PhD degrees
- Over \$22.5M in INTO OSU-generated earnings reinvested in international student scholarships and global recruitment activities
- \$1.5B in state economic impact from OSU international enrollments

Presenters said university efforts would continue to increase international learning opportunities, increase research on international topics and with international collaborators, and leverage international ties and initiatives to advance economic and workforce development goals. It was further noted that the university was expanding efforts to support global research, with OSU researchers receiving \$2.2M in international funding in FY2023.

Committee Vice Chair Bulger asked how the university was engaging alumni who were international students. Atebe said that was a priority. She mentioned the new leadership structure for internationalization at OSU and noted efforts with the International Global Engagement Committee to identify action plans for specific priorities – including alumni engagement – by next year.

Trustee Chávez-Haroldson asked for clarification on the committee identifying action plans and further inquired about how international students were involved in generating ideas. Wuhs explained that the

International Global Engagement Community (IGEC) is a cross-campus entity drawing on the research enterprise, including members of the Research Office; student success leaders across campus; and those involved in workforce and community development. Atebe said that international students were engaging through their academic programs; through grants and other funding opportunities; and as they graduate and move back to their home countries or wherever careers take them. Atebe said the hope was that international alumni continue to be ambassadors for OSU and regard the university as a partner they want to engage with in their careers.

Committee Chair Manning asked about employers' workforce development needs – especially related to engineering and business. She asked how often international graduates stay in the U.S. and how easy or difficult it is to do. Atebe said the Office of International Services works closely with students who want to stay in the U.S. after graduation to help them apply for work authorization permits, which allow an additional one-year stay (an additional two years for STEM graduates). She added that about half of international graduates had pursued that opportunity between 2020 – 2023.

c. Student Housing Vision

Vice Provost for Student Affairs Dan Larson and Associate Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Executive Director of University Housing & Dining Services Stephen Jenkins presented a housing and dining vision for OSU's Corvallis campus. They were joined by Ryan Jensen from Brailsford & Dunlavy.

Larson and Jenkins reported that the housing and dining program on the Corvallis campus was programmatically and financially sound, adding that residence halls were well maintained and had received over \$160M in investment since FY2010.

However, they reported that older buildings with higher density had lower student satisfaction, with many students seeking more privacy in their accommodations. They noted that the vision suggests renovating (rather than replacing) most existing residence halls over the coming decades to meet students' changing needs in addition to building approximately 3,500 beds of new housing and expanding or replacing dining centers to meet greater demand.

Presenters noted that implementing the changes suggested in the housing and dining vision over the next decade would allow the Corvallis campus to accommodate 7,500 students (compared to the current 5,000). They added that financial modeling by Brailsford & Dunlavy demonstrated that the vision was financially viable and sustainable and provided additional revenue.

Trustee Scott asked if undergraduate students just didn't want the triple accommodation option, even though it's the least expensive. Jenkins noted that less than ¼ of the students in economy triples had requested them and that almost all had originally asked to be in a double. He said consultants who talked to students found that the buildings with the highest density had lowest level of student satisfaction.

Trustee Chambers asked about the biggest barriers in achieving a goal as big as 6,000 housing units. Jenkins identified the top three barriers as (1) the land development code for the city of Corvallis and the need for more development allocation on campus; (2) financial viability (cost and capital) and past failure to take advantage of the economy of scale; and (3) infrastructure issues, like sufficient power, steam, roads and sidewalks, in addition to using up existing parking to develop on the south side of campus.

Trustee Bonanno reported that living on campus was the most expensive of the four different living options she has had as a student and asked if new units would be competitive with off-campus housing. Jenkins said that was the intent, adding that off-campus housing prices were increasing at two to three

times the rate of on-campus housing and that OSU had been able to maintain rent increases of 3 – 5 % over the past 10 years.

Trustee Macpherson said he supported increasing the percentage of students OSU could house on campus but expressed concerns about the lack of sufficient market-rate housing within the community. He asked if the university had any leverage with the city to overcome resistance to replacing old low-density housing stock with more high-density living arrangements. Larson said that he and Paul Odenthal were co-chairing a group that included major employers in Corvallis and Albany to explore how OSU could partner as an employer and create more incentives for development. He noted that a lot of remaining properties close to campus were owner-occupied, which presented a challenge to Macpherson's proposal.

Trustee Chávez-Haroldson asked if housing fees were the same for each student and Jenkins explained that housing rates varied based on room type and meal plan.

d. 2023 Committee Assessment Results

Board Secretary Jackie Bangs and Committee Chair Julie Manning gave an overview of the committee assessment results.

Bangs provided information on the assessment process, noting that collection of feedback was delayed to accommodate new members of the board. She said the same survey questions have been asked for ten years, providing an accurate look-back at five-year intervals. Bangs and Manning noted dips in the survey results compared to previous years and noted the challenge presented by the broad scope of the committee.

Committee Vice Chair Bulger expressed appreciation for being included in the assessment as a new board member and added that the results might be different if they were collected now. She asked if it would be helpful to have Provost Feser or his team address how the institution assesses academic quality.

Trustee Macpherson suggested that the infusion of new board members and the subjective nature of the rating system could skew the numbers in comparison to previous years' results. He said the takeaway was the comparison within the different categories and expressed appreciation for high quality materials.

Trustee Scott commented on the high quality of presentations and leadership and suggested the addition of new committee members changed the ratings. She felt that determining the role of the board was most difficult with the ASC, since curriculum and on-the-ground matters were delegated to the university and faculty. She said the role of the ASC was to educate the board and provide them with context. She added that the decision-making role of the committee was different and the scope smaller, which could impact the ratings.

Trustee Chávez-Haroldson said she would like to hear more questions and have more engagement from fellow committee members.

Trustee Bedient said a brief lesson on university processes related to ensuring the quality of academic programs might help committee members better understand their responsibilities. She noted there was originally some consternation over how the ASC was qualified to approve academic programs. Committee Chair Manning suggested that information be included in the next provost's report.

5. Action items

a. Academic Program Approval: MEng in Engineering Management

Alix Gitelman, vice provost for Academic Affairs and Wade Marcum, senior associate dean in the College of Engineering, presented details of the program. Jack Istok, interim school head in the School of Civil Engineering, and Lisa Templeton, vice provost for educational ventures, were on hand to answer questions.

Apropos of the previous discussion on committee assessment results, Gitelman said she would be happy to provide the board with an overview of the robust internal process through the faculty senate before a new program comes to the board for consideration.

Dr. Wade Marcum gave an overview of the proposed degree program, noting that the curriculum for the program had been offered through the School of Industrial Engineering since 2015. Marcum said the new program was a complement to the construction engineering management degree through Ecampus and provided a way for students to move from that degree to the master’s degree. He estimated an initial enrollment of 70 students.

The committee chair sought a motion to approve the Ecampus Master of Engineering degree effective summer 2024 pending approval by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. A motion was made by Committee Vice Chair Bulger, seconded by Trustee Macpherson and approved by all committee members in attendance. The motion carried.

b. Academic Program Approval: M.F.A. in Writing (OSU-Cascades)

Alix Gitelman was joined by Larry Rodgers, dean of the College of Liberal Arts, to introduce the proposed academic program. Sherm Bloomer, chancellor and dean at OSU-Cascades, and Tim Jensen, director of the School of Writing, Literature, and Film, were present to answer questions.

Rodgers described the proposal as a bureaucratic change that was necessary to differentiate between the MFA writing programs at Cascades and Corvallis, noting that both programs could not operate under the same name. He provided some background on the existing MFA at Cascades, which was launched in 2013 after the success of the Corvallis program. Rodgers noted that, while the Corvallis MFA is a traditional two-year residential program, the Cascades program is a low-residency degree. He added that the Cascades program currently has 18 master’s students with an average age of 36, emphasizing its success in meeting the needs of adult learners and full-time working students.

The committee chair sought a motion to approve the Master of Fine Arts degree in Writing at OSU-Cascades effective summer 2024, pending approval from the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. A motion was made by Trustee Chávez-Haroldson, seconded by Trustee Macpherson and approved by all committee members in attendance. The motion carried.

6. Adjournment

With no further discussion or business before the committee, Committee Chair Manning adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Stacy Jeffries
Executive Assistant, Office of the Board of Trustees