



The Board of Trustees of Oregon State University

Meeting of the OSU Board of Trustees

January 19, 2024

9:15 a.m. – 1:35 p.m.

Virtual Meeting Held via Zoom

MINUTES

Trustees present: Patty Bedient, Kasaundra (Kassy) Bonanno, Julia Brim-Edwards, Stephanie Bulger, Karla Chambers, Maria Chávez-Haroldson, Susan Clark, Román Hernández (*vice chair*), Grant Kitamura, Greg Macpherson, Julie Manning, Elise McClure, Jayathi Murthy (*ex officio*), Kirk Schueler (*chair*), Inara Scott

University staff: Teresita Alvarez-Cortez, Jackie Bangs, Belinda Batten, Kevin Dougherty, Alix Gitelman, Becca Gose, Mike Green, Heather Hesano, Jen Humphreys, Stacy Jeffries, Paul Odenthal, Rob Odom, Shalece Rains, Melanie Rose, Patti Snopkowski, Irem Tumer, Scott Vignos

Invited guests: Ben Cannon, Carissa O'Donnell, Keera Puett, Eric Schoenstein, Yvette Spitz, Thomas Toepfer

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

Board Chair Kirk Schueler called the meeting to order at 9:17 a.m. Board Secretary Jackie Bangs called the roll and verified a quorum.

Chair Schueler delivered the university's land acknowledgment statement.

2. Public comments

Mark Dunbar provided comments on Service Employees International Union (SEIU) negotiations and contracts for OSU's classified workers.

The following individuals provided comments on management of OSU's research forests: Debra Higbee, Robert Hughes, Doug Pollock and Anne-Marie Oliver.

The following individuals submitted written comments on management of OSU's research forests: Philip Brownell, Howard Bruner, Bonnie Burkart, Beeara Edmonds, Patti Haggerty, Justice Lamer, Lyn Larson, Shannon O'Brien, Berthe Leodra Palmrose and Craig Patterson.

3. Opening comments and reports

a. Chair's comments

Board Chair Kirk Schueler noted a single item in his report: efforts to identify nominees for the two pending at-large vacancies on the board. He said the plan was for President Murthy to discuss potential nominees with the board at its April meeting.

b. President's report

Before delivering her report, OSU President Jayathi Murthy noted the passing of OSU President Emeritus John Byrne and asked those present to join her in a moment of silence and reflection in honor of OSU's 12th president, who served the university in that role from 1984 to 1995.

The president began her report by noting that spring registration was up 4.5%. She said the university's top priority was serving Oregon residents and reported that OSU educates more Oregonians than any university in the state, enrolling over 4,000 more students today than it did in 2000, a 37% increase.

Murthy reported that implementation of *Prosperity Widely Shared* – the university's new strategic plan – was underway. She also noted the closeout of the previous strategic plan and its key accomplishments, including a record \$418M in research awards; a new baccalaureate core curriculum; expanded financial aid; and implementation of multiple DEI programs to better support student success. She also mentioned an investment of nearly \$350M toward renovating 54 buildings, including nearly \$150M in improvements to research spaces in 42 buildings.

President Murthy reported that the first season at PRAX (the Patricia Valian Reser Center for the Creative Arts) was almost fully booked, with \$5 student tickets offered in advance and free student tickets on the day of each performance.

She announced AI Week at OSU from April 8 – 12, 2024, culminating in the inaugural Global Futures Forum and the project launch of the Jen-Hsun and Lori Huang Collaborative Innovation Complex. She added that OSU alumnus and CEO of Nvidia Jen-Hsun Huang would join her in a fireside conversation moderated by Provost Feser, followed by panel discussions featuring leading intellectuals in the field of AI, including renowned OSU faculty.

Murthy reported that OSU's distinction as an engine for economic development and scientific advancement was recognized by the White House through the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration. She added that OSU is the only university in the nation to be selected to lead two federally designated tech hubs: one focused on microfluidic technology for semiconductors; the other on mass timber design and manufacturing.

The president said OSU was proud of the five years invested in collaborative planning for the Elliott State Research Forest but had chosen not to ask the board to authorize the university's participation in the management of the forest at this time, citing tribal and other concerns about the current strategy, including external constraints that limited the university's ability to operate it as it was envisioned as a world-class research forest and the lack of essential start-up funding.

Murthy welcomed Chance White Eyes as the inaugural director of tribal relations and OSU alumnus Trent Bray as OSU's new head football coach.

In closing, the president noted last month's historic victory in the Washington Supreme Court and an agreement with the departing 10 universities to end litigation over governance of the Pac-12 conference. She emphasized that the holistic development and well-being of student-athletes has been OSU's highest priority from the beginning. She also noted a scheduling agreement with the Mountain West conference for the 2024 football season and plans with the West Coast conference for 10 other sports, which will provide OSU with certainty while minimizing travel time for student-athletes, families and fans.

c. Associated Students of Oregon State University Report

ASOSU President Carissa O'Donnell expressed appreciation for efforts to connect with students at the President's Winter Celebration, which unfortunately had to be canceled due to inclement weather. She noted a high level of student anticipation for the event and said she hoped it could be rescheduled to coincide with a future board meeting.

O'Donnell cited examples of the ASOSU's continued advocacy for students, including gender-neutral restrooms and a shared micro-mobility program to provide access to electric scooters that was moving forward in partnership with OSU Transportation Services.

She announced that a task force on student employment would conduct a university-wide student wage assessment to identify pay discrepancies among campus units and added that the ASOSU continued to work toward bi-monthly paychecks for student employees.

O'Donnell said the ASOSU was exploring the possibility funding student athletic tickets through student fees. She expressed growing concern over the price of higher education and reported that ASOSU would partner with the Oregon Student Association to advocate for higher education at upcoming legislative sessions, including University Lobby Day on Feb. 8 and OSU Lobby Day on Feb. 14.

In closing, O'Donnell reported that 24 applications had been submitted for the two new student positions on the OSU Board of Trustees, with the two finalists identified after a 60-day search that included interviews and supplemental writing submissions. She added that student government elections would take place before the April board meeting, when she hoped to introduce her successor.

Trustee Bonanno asked if the ASCC was included in the Oregon Student Association, and O'Donnell was under the impression that discussions were underway.

Trustee Macpherson thanked O'Donnell for the ASOSU's advocacy efforts and asked if she had thoughts on getting other institutions involved. O'Donnell reported that the Beaver Caucus was in contact with other Oregon universities and the ASOUSU was also working with policy directors and student body presidents from other institutions.

d. Associated Students of Cascades Campus report

ASCC President Keera Puett began her report with an update on recent OSU website transitions she said resulted in fewer students on the Cascades campus utilizing funds for emergency housing, childcare and development.

Puett reported that student services were underutilized in comparison to previous years, except for the food pantry. She said there were 28 applications for free non-perishable food this time last year, compared to 61 applications this year. She noted that increased applications were not necessarily a sign of explicit food insecurity but reflected the need to mitigate the high cost of living in Bend by allowing students to divert money otherwise spent on food to rent and other essential expenses. She added that subsidies from the emergency housing fund, in comparison, could negatively impact students' financial aid status because they are seen as increased income.

She announced second annual mini golf tournament on May 10 to raise money for services available to the OSU-Cascades student body.

Puett also reported that the ASCC would request funding from the state legislature for a land remediation project at OSU-Cascades that would set the foundation for the health and recreation center and a second residence hall.

Vice Chair Hernández asked how the food pantry was supplied. Puett said it was originally funded by student fees but is now funded entirely by donations from the OSU Foundation.

Trustee Chambers and Chair Schueler suggested additional resources to help on the supply side for the food pantry, including the Oregon Food Bank, the Linn-Benton Food Share and similar organizations in Deschutes County.

In response to a question from Trustee Bonanno, Puett said that the ASCC did not currently have a partnership with the OSU Basic Needs Center but would reach out to them for guidance as the Cascades campus expanded its food pantry. Puett added that there were plans to expand offerings at the food pantry to include meat, eggs and cheese when they have more designated space in the new student success center.

President Murthy suggested a campus-wide poll to determine how much need there is for the food pantry and how big the program needs to be.

e. Faculty Senate Report

Yvette Spitz delivered her inaugural report as the 47th president of the faculty senate.

She announced that the faculty senate would be working in collaboration with the Office of Faculty Affairs on promotion and tenure criteria and changing DEI language in the faculty handbook. She added that the senate would also revisit the MOU on shared governance signed by President Ed Ray and former Faculty Senate President Dwayne Plaza in 2020.

Spitz noted ongoing faculty senate involvement with Academic Affairs on core education and the implementation of the university's new strategic plan. She also mentioned efforts to increase engagement among faculty senators and revisit the election process, adding that work on a letter of solicitation for the candidacy of the faculty position on the board was underway and that process changes included consultation with the union.

The faculty senate president extended an invitation to trustees to attend faculty senate meetings, which are held on the second Thursday of the month.

Chair Schueler noted an opportunity for the board and the faculty senate to compare notes and have further discussion on shared governance as the senate revisits its MOU and the board develops its philosophy. He also commented on how promotion and tenure could run counter to the idea of interdisciplinary collaboration, with the need to publish diluting collaboration.

f. OSU Foundation report

Eric Schoenstein, immediate past chair of the OSU Foundation Board of Trustees, provided an update of foundation activities.

Schoenstein reported that donors gave \$79.7M for the second quarter of the fiscal year ending December 31, just over half of the baseline fundraising goal of \$142M for 2024 and roughly 46% of the stretch fundraising goal of \$174M.

He said the most recent endowment market valuation was slightly over \$831M on November 30, 2023, up from \$789M at the same time last year. He added that the 2023 endowment impact report demonstrating how endowed funds support the future of the university was distributed to 1,700 donors. Schoenstein noted that endowment distributions in AY2023 grew to \$27.8M, with roughly 37% of those distributions supporting scholarships and fellowships; 27% supporting faculty and 26% going toward program support.

Schoenstein said the foundation continued to let alumni and fans know how to best support student-athletes – from buying tickets and watching games to wearing Beaver gear and making gifts. He said the foundation was working with President Murthy and Scott Barnes, vice president and director of Intercollegiate Athletics, on a fundraising initiative to inspire gifts to the Athletics Fund for Excellence.

He announced that the foundation was partnering with the Office of the Provost again on a faculty match program to incentivize the creation of endowed faculty positions. He also noted an increased goal of \$500M for student success in the Believe It! fundraising campaign. He said the foundation was partnering with the university on fundraising to support the “Finish in Four” initiative to help students with high financial need graduate in four years.

Trustee Macpherson said conference realignment had energized Beaver Nation and asked if Schoenstein had thoughts on how to sustain interest over time. Schoenstein said the foundation had left primary updates and ongoing communication to President Murthy and Scott Barnes rather than making assumptions on how to interact. President Murthy acknowledged the foundation’s support for athletic salaries and a leadership fund, in addition to help on the legislative front, where the Beaver Caucus has played an important role.

Trustee Chávez-Haroldson asked Schoenstein to clarify the difference between fundraising goals and stretch goals. Schoenstein said fundraising goals were set by looking at a five-year rolling average and adding a small increase, with the stretch goal being a number to strive for above and beyond the fundraising goal.

Trustee Chambers requested an update on the foundation’s real property committee in a future report to the board.

g. Higher Education Coordinating Commission report

The board heard a report from Ben Cannon, executive director of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC).

Cannon mentioned a HECC request to the legislature to release approximately \$18M in funding to support Oregon’s technical and regional universities and Portland State University with one-time funding.

He reported on a concept in a bill from Senator Dembrow to create a direct or guaranteed admissions system in Oregon for high school students who meet eligibility requirements. He also mentioned an effort from some legislators to create retroactive eligibility for the Oregon Promise – the free community college program for recent Oregon high school graduates – for students who may not have taken advantage due to the impacts of Covid.

Cannon also mentioned the role that states could play in helping fund research and programmatic support to build and train the semiconductor workforce.

In closing, he noted challenges related to the very late launch of recent changes to the FAFSA and the resulting late awarding process due to hitches in the rollout. Despite those challenges, he said it seemed likely that the new formula for determining financial need would qualify more students for larger Pell Grant awards and potentially larger state awards.

Chair Schueler mentioned certain legislators had a keen interest in examining governance in higher education in recent years and asked Cannon for his take on that trend. Cannon confirmed there was widespread interest in at least examining the governance changes made a decade ago, and he hoped the legislature would support a process to evaluate before any changes are made. He noted the impact of factors other than governance changes – from state funding to demographics and market trends playing out across the country.

Trustee Macpherson mentioned improvement in Oregon’s relative standing to other states in support for higher education and asked about the current state of play. Cannon cited opportunity and potential given the current legislative situation but cautioned that education is competing against other extraordinarily pressing state needs. He added that higher education funding hasn’t traditionally been a top-three priority for state leadership but that workforce development opportunities could end up driving higher education funding.

4. Consent agenda

- a. Minutes of the October 20, 2023 Meeting of the Board of Trustees**
- b. Minutes of the October 20, 2023 Executive Session of the Board of Trustees**

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Trustee Bonanno and seconded by Trustee Chambers. The consent agenda was approved by all board members in attendance.

5. Reports of standing committees of the board

- a. Academic Strategies Committee**

Committee Chair Manning provided a brief overview of the previous day’s Academic Strategies Committee meeting. She noted that Provost and Executive Vice President Ed Feser was in China meeting with recruiters and alumni donors in Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou as part of an effort to grow enrollments post-pandemic. In Feser’s absence, the provost’s report was delivered by Alix Gitelman, vice provost for Academic Affairs and senior vice provost.

Manning noted four discussion items that came before the committee; these included a research and innovation briefing; an internationalization and global engagement briefing; a 10-year vision for addressing student housing and dining needs on the Corvallis campus; and the results of the committee’s 2023 assessment survey.

She reported committee approval of two academic programs: a Master of Engineering degree in Engineering Management offered through Ecampus, and a Master of Fine Arts degree in Writing at OSU-Cascades.

Full details on each agenda item and a record of all board discussion are available in the minutes of the January 18, 2024, Academic Strategies Committee meeting.

b. Finance and Administration Committee

Committee Chair Elise McClure provided a summary of the previous day's meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee, which started with a report focused on athletics finances from Vice President for Finance and Administration Mike Green.

McClure said the committee had accepted an updated work plan for 2024 to include two progress updates on the Administrative Modernization Program (AMP) each year. She added that the committee also accepted the fiscal year 2023 internal bank report and voted to refer an action to the full board at today's meeting to consider a resolution for long-term debt refinancing.

She noted the committee also heard presentations on preliminary FY2025 tuition scenarios; the Corvallis campus budget allocation model; and OSU's financial metrics over the last five years.

Full details on each agenda item and a record of all board discussion are available in the minutes of the January 18, 2024, Finance and Administration Committee meeting.

c. Executive, Audit and Governance Committee

Board Chair Kirk Schueler summarized the previous day's meeting of the Executive, Audit and Governance Committee (EAGC), noting recommendations to the full board for today's meeting for the election of board officers and a presidential compensation adjustment. He reported that the committee also voted to accept the Office of Audit, Risk and Compliance 2023 final progress report and 2024 annual plan.

Schueler noted discussion items presented to the EAGC, including the committee's 2023 assessment results; an annual review of the delegation of authority; and the board's shared governance philosophy. Schueler noted the last item was part of the committee's updated charter and emphasized its work in the area of governance. He mentioned the possibility of a work group or a small group of trustees to help draft the shared governance philosophy.

Full details on each agenda item and a record of all board discussion are available in the minutes of the January 18, 2024, Executive, Audit and Governance Committee meeting.

6. Action items

a. Election of Board Officers

Board Secretary Jackie Bangs provided a summary of the committee's recommendations from the previous day's Executive, Audit and Governance Committee (EAGC) meeting, noting that board policy calls for the election of a chair and vice chair every two years.

Bangs said the committee had discussed the nominations it received at its January 18 meeting and forwarded a recommendation to the full board to elect Román Hernández as chair and Maria Chávez-Haroldson as vice chair. She added that other trustees nominated for those positions – Julie Manning, Inara Scott and Karla Chambers – expressed appreciation but declined further consideration.

Chair Schueler asked if there were any nominations from the floor, and there were none. There was no further discussion, and no public comment on this action item.

Chair Schueler sought a motion to elect Román Hernández as chair and Maria Chávez-Haroldson as vice chair of the board for terms beginning July 1, 2024, and concluding June 30, 2026, as outlined in

the Board Officers Policy. Trustee Chambers made a motion, which was seconded by Trustee Manning and approved by all trustees in attendance. The motion carried.

Vice Chair Hernández thanked fellow trustees and said it was his good fortune to have served under excellent board chairs Kirk Schueler and Rani Borkar. He recognized the historic nature of the board's vote to elect the university's first Latino board chair and Latina vice chair, adding he believed it to be a first for a public university in Oregon. In closing, he said it was his pleasure to serve an institution that he cares about so deeply.

President Murthy said she looked forward to working with Hernández and Chávez-Haroldson and emphasized the historic nature of the election.

Trustee Chávez-Haroldson thanked the board for what she has learned watching those in leadership roles before her. She recognized the women of color and leaders in education who had come before her, including her grandmother Emeteria Chávez and her mother Refugio Marlen Chávez; Orcilia Zúñiga Forbes, former trustee and OSU vice president; and Isabel Nuñez Pérez, OSU's first Latina student body president. She pledged to keep her commitment to the tribal nations and Indigenous communities in the interest of inclusive excellence and said she would do her best to address the need for equitable outcomes in the spirit of prosperity widely shared.

b. Presidential Compensation Adjustment

Chair Schueler noted that the Executive, Audit and Governance Committee discussed presidential compensation at their meeting yesterday and recommended an increase of 6% to the full board for consideration.

Committee members agreed that this level of adjustment was warranted by President Murthy's exemplary performance; the launch of the new strategic plan; the success of the capital campaign kick-off; and her outstanding job providing legislative testimony. It was also suggested that a retention bonus be considered in the future, and the chair said it would be a good study to undertake before the current presidential contract expires. He also noted the president had been working 17 months without a raise and suggested the board consider compensation adjustments in October of each year moving forward, when the board evaluates the president's performance.

Vice Chair Román Hernández noted that he and Chair Schueler had originally proposed a 4% increase; on further reflection, he considered the 6% increase warranted and equitable considering the president's exemplary leadership and the fact that she had not had a raise in 17 months.

Chair Schueler noted the compensation adjustment would be effective as of Jan. 1, 2024, pending approval by the OSU Foundation Board for its contribution to the president's compensation.

There was no further discussion and no public comment on this action item. Vice Chair Hernández made a motion that the board approve a 6% increase to President Murthy's salary. The motion was seconded by Trustee Bedient and approved by all trustees in attendance. The motion carried.

c. Debt resolution: Long-term Refinancing

Finance and Administration Committee Chair Elise McClure reminded trustees that the FAC voted yesterday to recommend that the board adopt a resolution authorizing the university to execute a bond transaction enabling the refinancing of current outstanding general revenue bonds to reduce the university's borrowing costs.

Vice President for Finance and Administration Mike Green, Treasury Director Heather Hesano and the university's financial advisor Thomas Toepfer of PFM presented details of the proposed debt resolution. Green provided background on the resolution, noting that current interest rate markets provided an opportunity for the university to refinance some of its outstanding taxable general revenue bonds and save money without directly impacting other budgets across the university.

Toepfer provided details of the refinancing option using a bond tender offer, citing an estimate of approximately \$3M in net present value savings. Hesano provided information on the authorization of the bond resolution as highlighted in the board materials, noting the resolution allowed for the execution of a market transaction but provided flexibility that does not require OSU to enter the market if the analysis does not result in adequate savings.

McClure said the Finance and Administration Committee had recommended that the board approve the proposed resolution at its meeting yesterday and recognized Green and his team for proactive and forward-looking work to save money by reducing borrowing costs.

With no further discussion and no public comment on this action item, Chair Schueler sought a motion to approve the debt resolution for long-term refinancing. A motion was made by Trustee Chambers, seconded by Vice Chair Hernández and approved by all trustees in attendance. The motion carried.

7. Discussion items

a. Board Assessment Results

Chair Schueler led a discussion of the 2023 board assessment results, which were collected after the October 2023 meeting so that recently appointed trustees would have the experience of attending a board meeting before providing feedback.

He noted that feedback emerged around the desire for deeper discussions and comments from all trustees during meetings, as well as decreasing the volume of board materials within reason. He mentioned trustee support for the enhanced onboarding and mentoring experience and appreciation for the level of support the board receives, adding that communication about topical matters was of great importance to trustees.

Trustee Chávez-Haroldson voiced appreciation for the assessment and the opportunity for group discussion and identifying room for improvement. She said she liked the cycle of checking in and giving feedback and was interested in how to be more welcoming to all board members.

Vice Chair Hernández noted new trustees' varied backgrounds and experiences, including their service on different boards and commissions, and said he looked forward to learning from them as board chair. He asked trustees to inform him of things they have seen done well on other boards and commissions.

Trustee Brim-Edwards commented on the high quality of the meeting materials, adding that trustees received background that prepared them to act from an informed standpoint. She urged caution in reducing the volume of the meeting materials and stressed the need to make sure the change wouldn't cause the loss of valuable information.

b. Diversity Action Plan

Scott Vignos, vice president and chief diversity officer, and Teresita Alvarez-Cortez, assistant vice president for strategic diversity initiatives, provided an update on the Diversity Action Plan (DAP).

Vignos said this work was essential to advancing OSU's mission, noting the current national conversation around equity efforts in higher education and the need to counteract persistent misunderstanding by showing how those efforts support success and excellence. He added that expanding access to higher education was part of OSU's land grant mission.

Alvarez-Cortez gave an overview of the development and planning process designed to help every stakeholder understand their contribution to advancing equity at OSU. She said the Diversity Action Plan framework was mapped to the university's strategic plan to advance equity in areas the university was prioritizing.

Vignos gave a high-level overview of the 23 tactics and 67 initiatives of the Diversity Action Plan, with the DAP tactics and initiatives organized under the corresponding action area from *Prosperity Widely Shared*, the university's new strategic plan.

Vice Chair Hernández asked how success or advancement toward goals would be measured. Vignos said that the DAP was aligned with *Prosperity Widely Shared*, which provided five key metrics for measuring progress; for example, metrics for different student populations as OSU makes progress toward an 80% six-year undergraduate graduation rate. He said conversations were ongoing with the DAP implementation team regarding a suite of dashboards to help monitor progress.

Trustee McClure asked for a definition of "stranded credit pathways." Vignos said the concept referred to students who left an institution with college credits but without earning a certificate or degree, adding the situation applied to a significant number of Americans. He said the goal was to help students bring those credits to OSU programs and realize the full value of the work they have already done.

Trustee Chambers suggested a third-party DEI audit could strengthen OSU's competitiveness for federal grants. Vignos mentioned the additional possibility of partnering with national organizations like the Association of Public Land Grant Universities to share ideas, show other institutions how OSU is holding itself accountable and be a model for continuous improvement.

Trustee Clark shared that she personally was able to take advantage of stranded credits and apply them toward an OSU degree program, adding that she was on schedule to graduate. Alvarez-Cortez noted there was no system-wide approach for applying stranded credits, which required students to advocate for themselves.

Trustee Manning asked if there were significant new or different areas that required investment or reallocation of resources. Vignos stressed the importance of affordability, noting it would continue to be a challenge across many different student communities and would require significant philanthropic support. He also noted the importance of state funding for education, given its importance in workforce development and the health and competitiveness of the state's economy. He mentioned the role of infrastructure and how built spaces create an environment where students feel they can be successful. Alvarez-Cortez mentioned funding the creation of gender-neutral restrooms more aggressively so that it wasn't tied to the regular building renovation schedule. She also cited the need for a language access program with easy access to interpretation and translation services, noting it was particularly important for OSU's efforts to recruit and retain students.

Chávez-Haroldson acknowledged unique stressors inherent in the work Vignos and his team are doing to advocate for change within complex systems. Vignos emphasized the high degree of support and

buy-in for equity work at OSU, along with an understanding for the value of doing the work well. He added that people in leadership roles were also excited about the work and listened to employees and students.

Trustee Scott mentioned the importance of civic dialogue and the ability to have difficult conversations, noting the need to ensure inclusive environments. She expressed concern about an increasing sense of alienation from colleges and universities and the challenge of creating spaces where people can talk to each other. She asked Vignos what could be done. Vignos said OSU was uniquely positioned to further this effort as an institution with a land grant mission, noting that the university serves constituents who don't always feel the same about current discussion topics. He stressed the need for members of the OSU community to be in productive conflict and engage across differences of opinion, which he said was also a student success and faculty excellence issue.

c. Legislative Update

Katie Fast, executive director of Government Relations, provided a legislative update.

Fast made staffing announcements, noting that Chance White Eyes had joined the Government Relations team to focus on building and enhancing relationships with tribal nations, and that Katheryn Yetter, OSU policy and standards specialist, would be assisting Fast in tracking legislation.

Fast provided highlights of OSU's legislative agenda, noting that the university would bring two athletic-related requests to the legislature; one to support the \$10.4M annual commitment to student athletic scholarships through an expansion of the current sports lottery program; and one for \$30M in assistance to cover OSU's Covid-related athletics deficit.

She said a new proposal before the legislature would request \$24M to complete the landfill remediation for the center block of the OSU-Cascades campus, creating 81 acres of contiguous land for development projects including new housing and a recreation center.

Fast mentioned a proposal to expand the current grant funded work OSU Extension and Engagement is doing at the community level to address mental health and drug overdose issues, noting demand from other counties and interest from rural legislators.

Fast gave an overview of shared legislative agendas with other universities or partners. She mentioned a \$30M request related to semiconductor workforce and research, which includes \$10M to community colleges and \$15M to universities to support faculty hires, graduate students or lab investments. She also noted a proposal from the Oregon Student Association and university student bodies for \$6M in student support programs, including \$5M for emergency grants to assist with basic needs and \$1M for open educational resources.

In closing, she provided information on policy issues expected this legislative session. She noted legislation introduced by Senate President Rob Wagner that would require educational boards to post recordings of meetings on their websites and mentioned additional legislation to commission a study of the state's university governing boards. She noted the continued implementation of SB 273, which was passed last session, stating that the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) had not yet scheduled required trainings or collaborative meetings between board presidents and HECC commissioners. She mentioned an item of note in an education bill introduced by Senator Dembrow that would authorize HECC to create an automatic admissions program for the state of Oregon and determine financial aid levels, which are currently determined by the Oregon Student Aid Council.

Vice Chair Hernández asked for Fast’s take on the specific ask for funding to cover Pac-12 realignment. Fast said one of the challenges with this request was keeping the issue alive. She added that the upcoming revenue forecast for February indicated approximately \$11M in additional revenue for this biennium, noting that OSU had some strong advocates in the Capitol but adding the caveat that there would be intense competition for those state funds. President Murthy sought to clarify misinformation and misunderstanding about OSU’s court victory and Pac-12 settlement, chiefly the perception that OSU did not need taxpayer money. She emphasized that the settlement was with the Pac-12 – not with OSU and WSU – and that money was not a piggy bank for the remaining universities. She cited extraordinary liabilities facing the Pac-12 and claims that would continue to surface related to NIL, student athletes as employees and other issues.

Trustee Kitamura asked for clarification on the \$40M shortfall in athletics referenced by Vice President for Finance and Administration Mike Green. Fast said that shortfall related to annual impacts like student athletic scholarships, and that it was separate from the \$30M legislative request to cover Covid-related losses that resulted when athletics could not generate revenue from ticket sales.

Trustee Chambers agreed with Fast’s reference to intense competition for state funds and noted the governor’s request for stakeholders to explain how their funding asks could support her priority of affordable housing. Fast said OSU was following housing issues closely and thinking about how housing needs for the OSU community, including students and the workforce, could align with the state’s interests.

8. Adjournment

With no further discussion or business before the board, Chair Schueler adjourned the meeting at 4:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Stacy Jeffries
Executive Assistant, Office of the Board of Trustees