



## The Board of Trustees of Oregon State University

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### Meeting of the OSU Board of Trustees

October 20, 2023

10:30 am – 4:15 pm

Memorial Union, Horizon Room

Corvallis, OR

### MINUTES

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

Trustees absent: Julia Brim-Edwards

University staff: Jackie Bangs, Belinda Batten, Jessica Brubaker, Tom DeLuca, Kevin Dougherty, Ed Feser, Alix Gitelman, Mike Green, Jen Humphreys, Stacy Jeffries, Deb Mott, Paul Odenthal, Rob Odom, Shalece Rains, Melanie Rose, Patti Snopkowski, Irem Tumer, Scott Vignos

Invited guests: Doug Barrett, Carissa O'Donnell, Keera Puett, Keith Tymchuk, David Underriner, Jack Williams

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

Board Chair Kirk Schueler called the meeting to order at 10:30 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

Andi Kinaya Putri Kesuma provided comments on international student support at OSU.

#### 3. Opening comments and reports

##### a. Chair's comments

Board Chair Kirk Schueler provided an overview of the previous day's board retreat, which focused on key elements of the university's next strategic plan.

Schueler noted the participation of two state legislators – Rep. Shelly Boshart-Davis of Albany and Rep. John Lively of Springfield – who engaged trustees and university leaders in a discussion of higher education in Oregon and the positive impact of OSU on communities statewide.

The chair also noted retreat presentations on the topic of shared governance from ASOSU President Carissa O'Donnell, ASCC President Keera Puett, Student Trustee Kassy Bonanno, Faculty Senate President Kate MacTavish and Faculty Trustee Inara Scott. He said that discussion would help inform

the board's draft shared governance philosophy, which will be reviewed and discussed by the Executive, Audit and Governance Committee later this academic year.

### **President's report**

Before delivering her report, OSU President Jayathi Murthy acknowledged the suffering and loss affecting Jewish and Palestinian communities in Israel and Gaza. She said the university was able to verify there were no OSU students or employees in the region and in imminent danger. The president added that university outreach and support to those groups most affected would continue.

Murthy transitioned to her report, noting her one-year anniversary as president of OSU. She thanked those who made her first year a year to remember, including trustees, legislative representatives, faculty, a remarkable team and administrative leaders across OSU and students.

She announced that enrollment had increased for the 27<sup>th</sup> consecutive fall term and noted that OSU enrolls more students than any other university in Oregon. She announced the aspirational goal of being a university where every student graduates and cited progress in six-year graduation rates, which have increased from 60.7% in 2011 to 70% in 2022.

Murthy reported \$480M in research awards last fiscal year – a university record. She noted that OSU's research expenditures also rose to a record \$367M during that time. She spoke about OSU's research community and its engagement in counties across the state, noting her recent visits to experiment stations in Union, Burns and Ontario, where OSU Trustee Grant Kitamura welcomed her to the Malheur Experiment Station.

President Murthy noted continuing uncertainty about the Pac-12 conference. She said OSU would work with Washington State to seek pathways to preserving the conference. She underscored the university's commitment to allow student-athletes to compete at the highest level possible. Murthy reported that the university anticipated a potential gap of more than \$40M in the next year's athletics budget due to the conference's destabilization. She said OSU was working with the Oregon legislature on possible financial support to offset potential losses, the OSU Foundation on philanthropic support and the consideration of institutional support.

#### **b. Associated Students of Oregon State University Report**

ASOSU President Carissa O'Donnell reported that ASOSU now has a fully operational student staff, executive branch, student senate and student fee committee.

O'Donnell spoke about her participation in a virtual town hall meeting to address student questions about the status of the Pac-12 conference with President Murthy, Vice President for University Relations and Marketing Rob Odom and Vice President and Director of Intercollegiate Athletics Scott Barnes.

She noted that student engagement and participation were strong across campus, with football tickets selling out and events being well attended.

O'Donnell said she was working with Trustee Bonanno and ASCC President Puett to implement changes related to the recruitment of students to fill the two new positions on the board, required by the passage of SB 273.

She announced that student shared governance partners were working with the Office of General Counsel on OSU requirements for recognition of a student government and would present that document to the board for adoption.

She announced the State of the Students event on November 8 and welcomed trustees and others to attend and connect with student leaders and organizations on the Corvallis campus.

In closing, O'Donnell reported that students' main concerns were tuition and cost of living. She asked trustees to respond to these stressors and urged them to engage with students.

**c. Associated Students of Cascades Campus report**

ASCC President Keera Puett began her report with an update on the Student Fee Committee, which is drafting revisions to the club budget proposals and looking to increase student use of the professional development fund supporting attendance at educational conferences. She noted that the entire fund balance of \$10K was used last year.

Puett noted that the food pantry, childcare subsidies and housing subsidies continue to serve students at OSU-Cascades. She added that plans for a greenhouse were in the beginning stages and reported that construction had begun on the new student success center, which she said would revolutionize the student experience at OSU-Cascades.

She noted collaboration with the Corvallis campus on the search committee for new student trustees, with students from OSU-Cascades also eligible for those positions.

In response to a question from Trustee Chávez-Haroldson about the goals of the planned greenhouse, Puett clarified that the food pantry only offered non-perishable food, so the hope was for the greenhouse to provide fresh produce.

Trustee Hernández asked how the food pantry was funded, and Puett responded that it was funded solely by donations.

**d. Faculty Senate Report**

Faculty Senate President Kate MacTavish delivered her final report in her role as faculty senate president. Schueler thanked MacTavish on behalf of the entire board for her involvement in the presidential search and other endeavors contributing to the success of the university.

MacTavish shared the following illustrative examples of how the faculty senate has enacted shared governance responsibilities during her tenure:

1. Reforming the 30-year-old curriculum of the baccalaureate core: MacTavish said this effort took several years and was approved by the faculty senate in Oct. 2022. She anticipates the new Bacc Core to be implemented by summer 2025. She cited the Office of Academic Affairs as a key partner in this work and noted significant funding from the Office of the Provost.
2. Providing checks and balances on shared governance processes across campus: MacTavish provided background on the function of the faculty consultative group, which is activated upon faculty request when a program is going to be closed or significantly reorganized. The group provides a set of recommendations and a deep dive into decision-making process.

3. Playing a role in matters affecting faculty life: MacTavish highlighted the revision of existing promotion and tenure criteria and creation of new criteria for ranks that previously did not have their own. She also mentioned the addition of new criteria focused on innovation and entrepreneurship and diversity, equity and inclusion. She cited the Office of Faculty Affairs as a shared governance partner in this work.

Trustee Scott thanked MacTavish for stepping into an intense presidential term and shouldering the enormous responsibility of the baccalaureate core reform. She expressed appreciation for MacTavish's leadership.

Trustee Bulger expressed appreciation for the Bacc Core's inclusion of equivalencies for community colleges.

Trustee Chávez-Haroldson asked MacTavish to highlight distinctions of teaching within the core. MacTavish mentioned new transition courses with a thorough introduction to resources available on campus; career experiences that are part of the core now; and courses with a "seeking solutions" component that focus on solving big issues.

Trustee Bedient thanked MacTavish and said she had enjoyed serving with her on the Presidential Search Advisory Committee.

**e. OSU Foundation report**

Dave Underriner, OSU Foundation Board chair-elect, provided an update of foundation activities via Zoom.

He mentioned the second annual volunteer summit last week and emphasized that growing the number of volunteers is essential to achieving the university's long-term goals.

Underriner thanked Trustee Macpherson, who provided an update on the OSU Board of Trustees' activities at the OSU Foundation Board of Trustees meeting last week. (Chair Schueler later clarified for the group that Trustee Macpherson is the board's liaison to the OSU Foundation Board.)

Underriner reported positive fundraising news, noting that last year was the third best fundraising year in the university's history. He announced that donors had given over \$37.4M in the first quarter of the current fiscal year – just over a fourth of the year's target goal of \$142M. He noted that the \$1.75B Believe It! fundraising campaign had surpassed the \$1.1B mark and added that the endowment was valued at \$827M at the close of the fiscal year, up from \$764M the previous year.

Underriner reported that the foundation board had endorsed the OSU Foundation strategic plan at their meetings last week. He said the plan was developed in alignment with the university's strategic plan and organized around three pillars: growing philanthropy support, building meaningful relationships and positioning the university for success.

**f. Higher Education Coordinating Commission report**

Ben Cannon, executive director of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, was not available to deliver the report. Chair Schueler noted that Cannon's written report was available on the board's website.

#### **4. Consent agenda**

##### **a. Minutes of the August 25, 2023 Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees**

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Trustee Bedient and seconded by Board Vice Chair Manning. The consent agenda was approved by all board members in attendance.

#### **5. Reports of standing committees of the board**

##### **a. Executive, Audit and Governance Committee**

Chair Kirk Schueler delivered a summary of the previous day's meeting of the Executive, Audit and Governance Committee.

He reported that the committee had accepted the Office of Audit, Risk and Compliance progress report presented by Chief Executive of Audit, Risk and Compliance Patti Snopkowski and received the annual update on the compliance and ethics program from Snopkowski and Deputy Chief Executive of Compliance and Ethics Susan Freccia. He added that the committee had also received an annual report on litigation, legal issues and trends from the Office of General Counsel, delivered by General Counsel Becca Gose.

Board Secretary Jackie Bangs delivered a needs assessment for at-large position vacancies and was joined by Executive Director of Government Relations Katie Fast for an update on the implementation of Senate Bill 273.

Schueler mentioned two recommendations for action that will come before the full board later in this meeting.

##### **b. Academic Strategies Committee**

Committee Chair Maria Chávez-Haroldson provided an update of the previous day's Academic Strategies Committee meeting.

She highlighted key updates from the comprehensive report delivered by Provost and Executive Vice President Ed Feser, including strong Fall 2024 applications and overviews of the Research Advancement Academy and major university-wide initiatives. She also provided a summary of where the university stands in negotiations with its four bargaining units.

Chávez-Haroldson reported that the ASC had approved a 2024 work plan detailing regular annual briefings in major domains.

She gave a brief overview of discussion items from the previous day's meeting, including a Faculty Affairs briefing from Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs Rick Settersten; an Extension and Engagement briefing from Vice Provost for Extension and Engagement Ivory Lyles; and a risk management report on interpersonal violence education, prevention and response from Vice Provost for Student Affairs Dan Larson, Executive Director for Equal Opportunity and Access Becky Bangs and Executive Director for Student Health Services Kelly Hower.

### **c. Finance & Administration Committee**

Committee Chair Román Hernández provided a summary of the previous day's meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee.

He relayed key points of the report given by Mike Green, vice president for Finance and Administration, including financial impacts on the athletics budget due to Pac-12 conference realignment. He noted that staff seek to fill a revenue gap of over \$40M.

Hernández noted that the committee had received updates on the status of capital projects previously approved by the board; the fiscal year 2023 fourth quarter operating management and investment reports; and the fiscal year 2024 operating budget approved by the board at its June 2023 meeting.

He noted that the committee had approved its 2024 work plan and would add status updates related to implementation of OSU's Administrative Modernization Program (AMP).

## **6. Action items**

### **a. Board chair's report: FY2023 presidential assessment**

Chair Schueler reported that the Executive, Audit and Governance Committee supported President Murthy's agenda and goals for the upcoming year and moved to recommend to the full board acceptance of the chair's report and the presidential assessment.

Trustee Hernández expressed appreciation for the proactive leadership and outstanding communications of President Murthy and her staff in addressing the Pac-12 issue.

Trustee Chávez-Haroldson said she appreciated the transparency and commentary around world events, which shows that OSU is paying attention to how world affairs affect students and faculty.

Trustee Bonanno asked the president about a long-term strategy to improve higher education funding in Oregon, noting chronic divestment over the past 30 years. President Murthy stressed the need to create a groundswell of support for the value of higher education and reverse the national narrative casting its value in doubt. She said it was also important to sell that vision to the state legislature.

Trustee Chambers thanked the president for her handling of the Pac-12 situation, noting feedback from the community that OSU has done the right thing. She commended the president for incorporating core values and keeping the student in the student athlete equation.

Chair Schueler expressed admiration for the president's ability to take a calm, serious approach to issues arising in higher ed. He added that he meets with the president monthly and commended her transparency and her clear and direct communication.

Trustee Bedient noted the importance of being bold and building on the success of the university. She commended President Murthy for her shepherding of the new strategic plan.

Trustee Manning was impressed by President Murthy's engagement with so many communities throughout the state and beyond. She commended the president on being receptive to trustee feedback and noted her ambitious goals and progress already made. Manning said she couldn't be prouder of President Murthy's leadership.

There was no further discussion, and no public comment on this action item. Chair Schueler sought a motion to accept the board chair's report and the 2023 presidential assessment. Trustee Macpherson

made a motion, which was seconded by Vice Chair Manning and approved by all trustees in attendance. The motion carried.

**b. 2024 board work plan**

Board Secretary Jackie Bangs provided background on the creation of the board's 2024 work plan, noting consistency in the categories for presentations to the full board driven by the board's charter. She invited discussion and questions from trustees on the 2024 annual plan.

Trustee Scott addressed the topic of educational opportunities and asked about featuring Ecampus at one of the board's spotlight events, given their importance in the new strategic plan.

Trustee Clark suggested a spotlight event featuring the cultural centers.

There was no further discussion, and no public comment on this action item. Chair Schueler sought a motion to approve the 2024 board work plan. Trustee Hernández made a motion, which was seconded by Trustee Bulger and approved by all trustees in attendance. The motion carried.

**c. Strategic Plan**

Provost and Executive Vice President Ed Feser and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Senior Vice Provost Alix Gitelman presented the university's next strategic plan, which will apply to the period 2024 – 2030.

Feser noted that core work for the plan was discussed at the board's fall 2022 retreat, where trustees were joined by college deans. Trustees also heard from President Michael Crow of Arizona State University about how that university executes organizational change to deliver on big goals.

The provost gave an overview of the extensive engagement for the strategic plan, including in-person and virtual town halls co-moderated with the president across the university community, with feedback also solicited through an online form. He mentioned valuable input from the Office of Research Advancement and the associate deans for research regarding areas in which OSU could establish a global/international research profile.

Feser described the process that led to the vision "Oregon State University will be a driving force for prosperity that is equitable, scalable and sustainable." He said the first step in the visioning effort was thinking about the challenges and opportunities on a global scale and recognizing that humankind has been successful in countering challenges and capturing opportunities over the long sweep of history, especially when taking advantage of the latest knowledge, technologies, and solutions. This perspective underpins the optimistic framing of the plan. The next step in visioning was to consider how OSU could make its own distinctive contributions to helping solve grand challenges and capture big opportunities, while also navigating trends in the higher education landscape. With this vision foundation, the strategic planning team considered goals, actions and tactics.

Gitelman gave an overview of the strategic plan's goals, actions and tactics. She stressed that the whole plan is based on OSU's foundational core values of excellence, access, justice, equity, sustainability and partnership.

She said that the first of the strategic plan's three major goals focuses on big discoveries that drive big solutions. She identified four key areas of research that were selected based on the national funding landscape and OSU's current strengths: climate science, clean energy, robotics and integrated health and biotechnology.

Gitelman noted that the plan's second goal – “every student graduates” – is more of a mindset than a metric and reflects an obligation to support students once they are admitted to OSU with the goal of earning a four-year undergraduate degree.

Gitelman spoke briefly about the third goal of the strategic plan, which calls for OSU to fuel a thriving world. She said that OSU – as a research university with a presence in all 36 counties in Oregon – is uniquely positioned to drive economic workforce and community development in a way that hasn't been done before.

Gitelman provided an overview of the implementation strategy for the plan. She emphasized that investment is needed to launch revenue-generating programs in the online space and said the university wanted to make key research investments as soon as possible.

In summary, Gitelman reported that final edits to the plan would be made over the next few days followed by an official launch on Nov. 17, 2023 at the Celebrating and Investing in Oregon State's Future event that also includes the presidential investiture. She said the plan would go into effect on Jan. 1, 2024, pending board acceptance. She asked the board to accept the plan, noting that the university's mission statement would remain unchanged.

Trustee Macpherson asked if metrics for achieving target goals would be measured on a calendar year or a fiscal year, noting the plan's effective date in January. Feser said metrics like retention would be tracked continuously, and that other metrics would be tracked depending on when information is available; for example, student success numbers are available in November, but comparators to key peers occur intermittently as data are available.

Trustee Chambers asked how thinking about AI had been incorporated into the plan. Gitelman said the university was making investments in areas of AI data, science and research computing that would support faculty broadly. She said teams were also considering the appropriate use of AI in research and administrative efficiencies. Feser added that AI would change how some of the university's business processes are done.

Trustee Chambers also commented on the importance of interdisciplinarity, noting that robotics and engineering are as vital as the Colleges of Agriculture and Forestry to the field of agribusiness. Gitelman emphasized the collaborative nature of OSU, noting that problems won't be solved in disciplinary silos. Feser added that the strategic plan wants to make that position a signature strength of OSU.

Trustee Bonanno asked if implementing the strategic plan would result in increased costs for students. Gitelman noted that a key focus of the goal that “every student graduates” is a “finish in four” component aimed at getting students to the job market faster. Feser added that the plan is also premised on the university's goals of holding tuition increases down and redoubling efforts to close the \$38M annual need gap for approximately 10,000 Pell-eligible students.

Trustee Bulger asked how the university would manage the fast pace of growth – particularly in Ecampus. Gitelman said that was being addressed both in terms of revenue generation and expenses to support that growth, like additional faculty. Feser noted the importance of building departments with a focus on all three mission elements of research, teaching and public engagement and clarified that the university was not looking solely to expand Ecampus by adding instructors to teach online.



Chair Schueler commended the forward-looking nature of the strategic plan and the effort to account for dramatic changes in the world that will affect what the university of the future looks like.

With no further discussion and no public comment on this action item, Chair Schueler sought a motion for the board to approve the university's next strategic plan. A motion was made by Trustee Bedient, seconded by Vice Chair Manning and approved by all trustees in attendance. The motion carried.

Feser thanked the staff behind the scenes who provided logistics support for the development of the strategic plan, mentioning Gigi Bruce in the Office of the Provost, in particular.

## **7. Discussion items**

### **a. Advancing Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice: Annual Report**

Scott Vignos, vice president and chief diversity officer, delivered the annual report.

Vignos began by expounding on the meaning of “inclusive excellence,” which he considers a function of the university's ability to incorporate diverse expertise, experiences and viewpoints in everything it does. He emphasized the principle of universal design and said that attending to the removal of barriers for one group benefits the entire university community.

Vignos provided an overview of the breadth of institutional diversity work and detailed a portfolio that includes strategic leadership, strategic initiatives, community relations, NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act), education, and assessment and evaluation.

He detailed progress made on the university's first comprehensive diversity strategic plan, launched in 2018, noting that 49 of the plan's 52 actions are complete. He added that the plan would sunset in 2023, with any remaining actions integrated into the next diversity action plan. He recognized impediments to progress, noting lack of time and capacity and, in some cases, organizational inertia.

In closing, Vignos spoke about the development of the diversity action plan. He noted the change of terminology from “strategic” to “action,” adding that the actions in the new plan would be directly aligned with the goals and actions in the university's new strategic plan. He announced a planned launch in winter 2024 and said he was excited about collaboration with the Research Office to address how the research enterprise is benefitting underserved communities.

Trustee Hernández noted that OSU's student body is more diverse than the local community and asked how the university was engaging with the community to make sure students feel welcome. Vignos noted positive working relationships with the local NAACP chapter and said students are also engaged with local organizations. He also mentioned an ongoing effort to better serve both students and employees by working with local anchor institutions to address issues like housing, childcare and elder care.

Trustee Chávez-Haroldson asked about diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts in budget and finance matters. Vignos cited a focus on student affordability and how important that issue is for first-generation, rural, low-income and transfer students. He noted a developmental educational approach on the policy side to better serve students who may not be aware of how things work with accounts and registration.

Trustee Chambers stressed the usefulness of DEI external audits, and Vignos acknowledged the value of bringing in trusted external experts.

Trustee Scott asked about the role of training and DEI action, asking what it looked like when it worked. Vignos said it depended on the goal, and that a push toward mandatory training may allow you to say “We trained everyone,” but changing behaviors requires a different approach. He said OSU preferred to focus on capacity building that changes the way leaders and others think about their roles. He noted a preference for working directly with units to talk about what their needs are so the Office of Institutional Diversity can tailor training.

Trustee Chávez-Haroldson voiced appreciation for skill building and negotiating difference, noting that the ability to listen and interact was beneficial to students and professionals alike.

## **8. Discussion items**

### **b. Legislative Update**

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

She began with an overview of the aggressive legislative schedule moving into an even-year session that is only 35 days long. She noted that the first draft of legislation for the February/March session had to be submitted in November, with final versions due on Jan. 12, 2024. She estimated around 300 bills in total for the upcoming session.

Fast then provided highlights of OSU’s legislative agenda, with support of student-athletes first on the list. She said the legislature had shown considerable interest around issues arising from Pac-12 realignment.

Fast said OSU’s priority moving into the February session is maintaining scholarships for student-athletes, noting that the university’s programs offer \$10.4M in athletic scholarships annually. She said OSU would seek to fund that amount through an expansion of the sports lottery program and added that the university would also ask the legislature for support in repaying its Covid-related athletics deficit.

She said the university would also request investments related to semiconductor workforce and research, noting the possibility of an additional 6,000 jobs in the semiconductor sector coming to Oregon and the need for a bigger workforce to fill those jobs.

In closing, Fast noted a legislative agenda item focused on infrastructure at OSU-Cascades, noting that completing the base infrastructure would reduce the initial cost for each package as the campus is developed.

Trustee Macpherson pointed out that legislative guests at the recent board retreat commended Fast’s excellent representation of the university in Salem. He noted that she also works with the Beaver Caucus, illustrating the different ways OSU’s interests are advanced.

Trustee Manning asked about the state’s financial situation going into the legislative session. Fast said that OSU’s legislative strategy lives and dies by revenue forecasts, with the next one due in mid-November. She added that the September revenue forecast for the state still looked strong and the university would be watching those forecasts closely.

### **c. Elliott State Research Forest Update**

Doug Barrett, Tribal Council Vice Chair for the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, joined via Zoom to provide comments in advance of the update.

He shared concerns regarding the management direction proposed for the Elliott State Research Forest (ESRF) and stated that the tribes were unable to support OSU's research proposal in its current form. He asked that the university work with the tribes on revisions that would allow them to play a meaningful role in stewarding the Elliott in partnership with OSU.

Barrett said the tribes' primary concern was that the OSU research proposal places the majority of the ESRF into reserve allocations that would grow into dense, closed-canopy forests that lack diversity and benefit a few species at the expense of overall forest health. He said that planning plantations for timber harvest prevents the tribes from harvesting basket materials and impedes the movement of elk and deer. Barrett expressed further concerns that plantation-style forests would increase the likelihood of fast-moving wildfires and that the portion of the ESRF not in reserve would be overharvested.

Following Barrett's comments, Associate General Counsel Jessica Brubaker provided a framework for the upcoming discussion, noting there would be a public session and an executive session. She added that the public session would cover the status of the habitat conservation plan (HCP) and the forest management plan (FMP); the financial viability of operating the Elliott State Research Forest (ESRF); the timeline of events that must occur for the ESRF to become operational in January; and information needed by the board to aid their decision on whether to participate in the management of the forest.

Brubaker noted that the executive session would not be open to the public and would cover the draft management agreement between the university and the prospective Elliott State Research Forest Authority (ESRFA). She clarified that, under Oregon law, executive sessions are only available for certain topics, adding that today's session could only address legal advice on the mitigation of risks within the management agreement and negotiation of the agreement overall. She informed attendees that outside counsel Kirk Maag would lead this discussion, and that she would take an active role when needed throughout both sessions to monitor what can be discussed. She noted that Oregon is unique in allowing members of the media at executive sessions, though they may not report on what they hear.

Further updates were provided by Ed Feser, provost and executive vice president; Tom DeLuca, dean of the College of Forestry; Paul Odenthal, senior associate vice president for administration; and Shannon Murray, program director for the Elliott State Research Forest.

DeLuca gave an overview of actions that need to be completed under SB 1546 and SB 161-3 in order for the ESRF to become operational, noting that the following were still outstanding: Department of State Lands action on the habitat conservation plan (expected Dec. 2023); third-party verification of financial viability of the forest (expected Nov. 2023); State Land Board approval of the forest management plan (expected Dec. 2023); and OSU Board of Trustees authorization for the university to participate in management of the forest (expected Dec. 2023).

Murray provided an update on the draft of the forest management plan and various analyses related to financials. She noted the draft was still in a public comment period until Nov. 8, 2023, and would be completed by the end of 2023 for State Land Board approval.

She emphasized that startup funding to support the first three years of operation was an important component in the financial planning for the ESRF. She reported that OSU and the Department of State Lands had both done significant work to seek funding for startup costs but a large gap still remained. She also presented two scenarios for estimated annual operating budgets – a full-capacity budget for an FTE of 24 and a reduced-capacity budget for an FTE of 16.

Murray then provided an overview of two different harvest scenarios with annual gross revenue projected over the course of 80 years. The first scenario involved intensive harvest (60-year rotation with the goal of maximizing wood production) in some younger stands of trees; the second scenario relied on extensive or ecological forestry in those same stands, with longer time periods between regeneration harvest and greater retention of standing trees.

Odenthal noted that fluctuations should be expected with the price of timber and other factors influencing the projections. He further reported that the Department of State Lands had engaged a contractor to do an inventory of carbon, with a focus on potentially selling it on the carbon market. He said he felt it was a mistake to make that decision at this point for monetary reasons instead of maintaining flexibility for future research.

Trustee Bedient asked how the shortfall would be funded if financial projections were wrong. Odenthal said those decisions would happen as part of the state budget cycle, since the ESRF is a state asset. He stated OSU's position that overall responsibility for funding of the forest belongs to the ESRF Authority on behalf of the state, and not OSU.

Trustee Chambers noted wildfire risk to Southern Oregon and the burnable fuel load for the Elliott, adding that tribes and local communities were all concerned about wildfire risk with hotter climates.

Trustee Hernández asked who would make the call regarding whether to fight a wildfire or take the research interest of letting it burn. DeLuca said it would be the state's decision, since the forest would remain a state entity.

Trustee Scott noted that the habitat conservation plan and forest management plan both had annual wildfire protection costs built into the budget based on what the Department of State Lands is spending.

Trustee Bedient recognized there was still a lot to be done and asked what happened if it didn't get done on time. Odenthal said the sunset clause would freeze the legislation if actions were not completed, which would prevent the forest from becoming operational. He said it would take further legislative action for the project to move forward again.

Trustee Chávez-Haroldson asked what it meant to include tribal stewardship and if it would be possible to achieve that goal before deadlines in December. DeLuca noted the hiring of a new associate dean for inclusive excellence and director of tribal initiatives in the College of Forestry who is helping guide the process of building relationships with the tribes. He said the university has also been meeting with different tribal councils from across the state and emphasized that the effort was a complicated collaborative process that OSU was navigating as best as possible. He noted that different stakeholder groups – like the environmental community and the tribes – frequently had conflicting positions on key issues.

Trustee McClure suggested that a term sheet with definitions would be helpful.

Trustee Scott acknowledged the frustration felt by people who have spent so much time on this, adding she had a sense of hope from DeLuca's communications that the collaborative process could be adapted.

Trustee Chambers stressed potential political and reputational risk associated with management of the forest and added that a business discussion was also necessary. She said she had no concerns with the research plan.

Trustee Bedient mentioned legal and financial risk, adding she was uncomfortable if the state was not responsible for legal risk.

Before the board moved into executive session, they heard from two additional outside presenters: Keith Tymchuk, ESRF Advisory Committee member and teacher, Reedsport High School and Dr. Jack Williams, emeritus senior scientist, Trout Unlimited, from the ESRFA prospective board of directors.

Williams mentioned challenges and frustrations but remained optimistic that the Elliott State Research Forest could succeed.

Tymchuk said that finding perfect in this situation would be impossible due to the complexity of the issue, further noting that what the process had arrived at and how it got there is remarkable. He said the resulting research forest would be remarkable, too. He acknowledged the risk inherent in the endeavor but hoped everyone could also see the great opportunity to create what he called the bellwether research forest, the best in the world.

Schueler announced that the board would meet in executive session pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(f) to consider privileged attorney-client communication. He read the following information:

“Representatives of the news media and designated staff will be allowed to attend the executive session. All other members of the audience are asked to leave the room. Representatives of the news media are specifically directed not to report on or otherwise disclose any of the deliberations or anything said about these subjects during the executive session, except to state the general subject of the session as previously announced.

“No decision will be made in executive session. At the end of the executive session, we will return to open session and welcome the audience back into the room.”

The board returned to the public session and continued its discussion.

Trustee Chambers wanted to be sure the board addressed the potential for future lawsuits, that legal costs were covered and there was a plan to handle any reputational risk.

Chair Schueler voiced concern about startup funding, saying it seemed premature to enter into an agreement if the startup funding had not been secured and there was uncertainty about where it would come from.

Trustee Chávez-Haroldson expressed a preference for hearing from all nine Oregon tribes if possible and having them involved in co-creating the future of this opportunity. DeLuca said he felt the College of Forestry was being uniquely proactive on this front, mentioning a summit on tribal forestry held last year at OSU for which leadership from all nine Oregon tribes was invited and asked what the university could do to improve its relationships with the tribes.

In closing, Chair Schueler noted that the board office would reach out to trustees about scheduling a Zoom meeting in December for the board to decide whether the university would participate in the management of the Elliott State Research Forest.

**9. 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