



Oregon State
University

The Board of Trustees of Oregon State University

Regular Meeting of the Academic Strategies Committee

April 1, 2021
Remote Meeting

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Mike Bailey, Michele Longo Eder, Susan Capalbo (*ex officio*), Lamar Hurd, Julie Manning, Paul Kelly, Preston Pulliams, and Irem Tumer (*ex officio*)

Other Trustees Present: Darry Callahan, Ed Feser (*ex officio*), and Mike Thorne

University Staff Present: Jennifer Almquist, Jon Boeckenstedt, Debbie Colbert, Alix Gitelman, Philip Mote, and Lauren Skousen

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

Committee Chair Preston Pulliams called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m., asked the board secretary to call the roll, and noted a quorum.

2. Provost's Report

a. Status Report: New and Existing Academic Program Reviews and Professional Accreditations in Progress

Acting Provost and Executive Vice President Susan Capalbo provided an update on a number of searches underway, including deans of Business and Public Health and Human Sciences. She said the new dean of the College of Education started in February. Capalbo shared that she would be returning to the faculty after five years as senior vice provost for faculty affairs, and an internal search would be conducted to fill the position. She provided an update on academic programs and accreditation. Pulliams asked about the status of the proposed Bachelor of Science in nursing, and Acting President Ed Feser said it had not yet been formally brought to a vote before the Statewide Provosts Council. Capalbo provided updates on accreditation, labor relations, and faculty affairs. She also reported on the university's transition to a continuous employment model for professional faculty. Capalbo concluded with updates on faculty hiring, including three recent hires made through the Tenured Faculty Diversity Initiative.

3. Consent Agenda

a. Minutes of the January 28, 2021 Academic Strategies Committee Meeting

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2021, meeting. During discussion, Trustee Paul Kelly reflected on the report at the previous committee meeting on sexual harassment and violence education, prevention, and response and said it affirmed the university's comprehensive and proactive approach. A vote was taken, and the motion carried.

4. Action Item

a. Centers and Institutes Review

Pulliams introduced this item by saying that under its charter, the Academic Strategies Committee must review and recommend to the Board the creation, merger, or closure of major university research centers or institutes (MURCIs) within the university. He then asked Vice President for Research Irem Tumer to

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present this item. Tumer said that in FY2019, the Research Office, working with colleges and other partners, initiated a process to review centers, institutes, and core facilities to assess their impact, efficiency, sustainability, and relevance to Strategic Plan 4.0 goals. She provided an overview of the purpose, strategic value, and organizational and financial models of the university's centers and institutes.

Tumer said reviews, strategic evaluations, and conversations with partners over the last two years had informed a number of proposed changes to MURCIs, and she presented two for consideration by the Board. She said the first proposed change was to transfer oversight of the Center for the Humanities to the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) to better align the center's mission and activities with the faculty and programs who are most directly served by it. Nearly all faculty who are directly supported by the center — through, for example, fellowships — are based in CLA. Feser added that the current central funding received by the center will continue; the college, the Office of the Provost, and the Research Office will jointly help guide programming; and the college will provide oversight and management support.

Tumer spoke next about the Center for Latin@ Studies and Engagement (CL@SE). She said that several years ago the center faced challenges in attracting the external funding that was envisioned in the plan that led to its creation and was foundational to its financial viability as a MURCI. As a result, CL@SE has been inactive since 2018. The Research Office, with support from the provost and executive vice president, recommend a formal sunseting of this already inactive center. Tumer added that scholarship in Latina/o studies continues, as it is not contingent on CL@SE being successful in attracting external grants and other forms of support. Tumer concluded by noting that the review and strategic planning process resulted in name changes for two MURCIs.

In response to a question from Trustee Lamar Hurd, Tumer described some of the funding challenges for CL@SE. She noted that a number of faculty have disciplinary expertise in Latina/o history, politics, and culture, and that important research in these areas continues across a number of departments. Trustee Michele Longo Eder asked about the zero-based funding process that was initiated in FY2020, and Tumer described the process of trying to better understand true costs and revenue in an effort to achieve financial sustainability. In response to a follow-on question from Eder, Tumer described the process of reviewing centers, including the engagement of faculty.

Following discussion, a motion was made and seconded to recommend to the Board closure of the Center for Latin@ Studies and Engagement and transfer of oversight of the Center for the Humanities to the College of Liberal Arts. The motion carried.

5. Discussion Items

a. Educational Programs Briefing & Discussion: Undergraduate

Pulliams asked Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Alix Gitelman to present this item. Gitelman began with a discussion of transfer student success. She acknowledged the perception among some external stakeholders that Oregon's seven public universities could do more to improve transfer student

success. She referenced data from the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) and analyses internal to OSU to better understand the realities of the transfer student experience. Gitelman said that while some of the perceptions are not reflected in the data, there are opportunities to continue to improve support of transfer students, and she added that the Statewide Provosts Council had charged a workgroup of academic affairs staff and university registrars from the seven public universities to study data on transfer student success in Oregon and to make recommendations regarding actions that would substantively improve transfer success. As an example, Gitelman noted that one concern with respect to transfer student success is the lower rate at which transfer students graduate, which is reflected in graduation rates both at Oregon institutions and nationally. She spoke about efforts to support more seamless transfer, including reforming the baccalaureate core.

In response to a question from Trustee Julie Manning, Gitelman spoke about efforts to provide distinctive curricula and support innovative pedagogy to advance the university's mission and vision. Kelly expressed interest in hearing how enrollment in new degree programs compared to the enrollment projected at the time the program was approved by the committee. Gitelman described the process of reviewing new programs, which includes an assessment of enrollment. Eder added that the continual assessment of courses and degree programs would be important to ensuring that the overall offerings support student interests and strategic goals, and Gitelman described the seven-year cycle of unit reviews that supports aim. Trustees discussed possible longer-term changes in the learning environment, and Gitelman noted that there would likely continue to be a variety of learning modalities offered to support the interest of some students in greater flexibility. In response to a question from Pulliams about the recruitment and retention of undergraduate students, Gitelman noted the importance of continuing to improve services and support for transfer students.

b. Educational Programs Briefing & Discussion: Graduate

Pulliams asked Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School Philip Mote to present this item. Mote began with an overview of the recently released Graduate Education Strategic Plan, which recognizes changes to the landscape of graduate education and charts a course for significant repositioning of graduate education at OSU. He noted some of the forces driving this change and described several initiatives underway at OSU, including introducing a mentorship training program for faculty who advise graduate students and expanding the adoption of holistic admissions practices. Mote described efforts to examine the current portfolio of graduate programs and noted the pursuit of a university-wide approach to developing a new interdisciplinary graduate program.

During discussion, Manning asked about efforts to re-envision graduate education to be responsive to changes in career pathways. Mote described a shift away from an almost exclusive focus on preparing Ph.D. recipients to be professors at research universities toward a focus on intellectual flexibility and transferrable skills. Pulliams asked what might be included in graduate education to support those who do become professors. Mote spoke about efforts to prepare graduates to teach and mentor students, including the university's graduate certificate in college and university teaching.

c. Enrollment & Financial Aid Briefing & Discussion

Pulliams asked Vice Provost for Enrollment Management Jon Boeckenstedt to present this item. Boeckenstedt began by remarking on the uncertainty brought by COVID-19; however, he noted that enrollment at OSU was largely stable. He expressed cautious optimism that fall 2021 would be closer to typical in terms of the student experience and said staff would continue to monitor what this might mean for enrollment. Boeckenstedt provided an overview of opportunities and threats, and he noted the importance of engaging in broad discussions about an institutional enrollment strategy that supports the university in achieving its mission and strategic plan goals.

Following the report, Manning asked about trends in the enrollment of international students. Boeckenstedt described the myriad factors that affect international student enrollment and said enrollment for fall 2021 remains uncertain. He added that OSU was working to establish an international presence through Ecampus. In response to a question from Trustee Darry Callahan, Boeckenstedt described the approach to awarding scholarships and allocating institutional financial aid and said staff continued to consider ways to streamline the approach. In response to a question from Trustee Mike Bailey, Boeckenstedt described a new initiative being considered called Pathways to OSU that would manage and align outreach programs. Hurd noted the importance of developing processes and structures that are transparent and predictable, and Boeckenstedt noted OSU's emphasis on access and summarized efforts to provide greater clarity to prospective students and families. Pulliams asked about OSU's move to the practice of test-optional admissions, and Trustee Khawater Hussein noted the importance of continuing to support students throughout their time at OSU. Bailey asked about the welcome center included as part of the project to renovate the west side of Reser Stadium, and Boeckenstedt described the potential for engaging prospective students and families and enhancing the experience of students and alumni.

6. Adjournment

With no further business proposed, Chair Pulliams adjourned the meeting at 3:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer M. Almquist
Assistant Board Secretary