

**Tuition Advisory Council**  
Friday, January 29, 2021

**Council Members (✓ indicates the member was present)**

- ✓ Sarah Grulikowski – Student
- ✓ Niko Hatch – Student
- ✓ Leslie Eldridge – Faculty Member

Tara Othman - Student

- ✓ Dennis Slattery – Faculty Member
- ✓ Matt Stillman – Administrator
- ✓ Susan Walsh – (Chair) Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Quinn Youngs - Student

**Guests Present**

Greg Perkinson, Neil Woolf, Josh Lovern

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The meeting started at 9:30am.

**Introductions and Orientation**

Council members and guests introduced themselves.

Walsh discussed the composition of the group and said she hopes even the non-voting members feel they have a role. She discussed Oregon House Bill 4141 from 2018. She said SOU took the lead in establishing this type of advisory body and set the bar for others in the state with regard to the role of students in the tuition setting process. HB 4141, which largely follows the model established at SOU, provides guidelines for this Council and its counterparts at other Oregon public universities. She said there are 8 official voting members, including 2 administrators, 4 students, and 2 faculty members. Others join the meetings to provide counsel. She said the learning curve for the issues discussed by the Council can be considerable, so she's happy to have Eldridge and Slattery participating as the faculty representatives again.

Walsh discussed the Tuition Advisory Council (TAC) page on the President's website (<https://sou.edu/president/tuition-advisory-council/>) and what can be found there, including the Council's Charter, the text of HB 4141, minutes from TAC meetings, and other resources. Looking at the enrollment data linked on the TAC page (<https://sites.google.com/a/sou.edu/enrollment-drivers/>), Stillman walked the Council through some of the data displayed there.

Walsh said this group will talk a lot about enrollment. She said we don't have very many levers for increasing revenue; the main levers are state funding, fees, tuition, and enrollment, and

with the help of tools created by Lovern we'll be able to plug in projections and play around with different scenarios so we can do 'what if' planning. Woolf said another report that will be helpful is the Admissions Funnel report for fall of 2021, which gets updated weekly and shows enrollment activity for the upcoming fall. He said the info in that report is based on applications for fall and only reflects new students, who make up about 25% of our total enrollment, but it's interesting to track. He said as of now we're not too concerned about the number of applications we've received. Walsh asked Woolf to remind the members of the Council what 'confirmed' means on that report. Woolf said this refers to students who have confirmed their intent to enroll and provided a \$300 deposit; typically, around 90% of these students actually enroll.

Walsh discussed the Strategic Communication Plan on the TAC website. She said it reflects the goal of clear and inclusive communication. The Council tries to get as much feedback as possible up until it makes its recommendation to the President. She said this communication plan was put together with help from students who provided advice on the most effective ways to get information out to their peers and others. She said this year is a bit different because the TAC usually has in-person meetings that others could sit in on, and in past years we've been able to host town halls. She said we can do some things online, but we may have to be creative.

Walsh encouraged any Council members who haven't experienced a Board of Trustees meeting to do so. She said the Trustees care very much about this issue and value the role of students and others in the process.

## Budget

Perkinson briefly discussed SOU's budget and said with all of the lost revenue after the effects of COVID started to be seen here last March, after CARES funding the University is down about \$4 million. He said a second round of CARES funding appears to be in the works, and it looks like \$6.2 million may be coming our way, with \$1.7 million of that to be given directly to students. He said people in his office are working through how the second increment of this funding will get to students. Thinking about how remaining funds could be used, he said we know that our biggest losses were in the auxiliaries (Housing, Dining, and similar areas). He said the bad news is that COVID happened, but the good news is that we're starting to get some federal relief and anticipating additional relief. He said financials have been tough but he has some near-term optimism that there's light at the end of the tunnel.

Walsh suggested that Perkinson might speak about the Governor's recommended budget. Perkinson said the Governor's recommended budget proposes to keep the Public University Support Fund (PUSF) flat. He said it certainly could have been worse, but keeping it flat doesn't keep up with rises in costs and inflation. He said keeping the PUSF flat would mean \$837 million, but people are working to see if they can get it to \$900 million. Lovern said there have been some changes to the funding model, which determines how the money in the PUSF gets allocated. Perkinson said a funding model working group made recommendations to the

Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), which, if put into effect, would mean SOU would see some slight benefits with an increase in mission funding and an increase in activity funding. He said until the funding model gets fully approved he's withholding judgement, but the expectation is that we may see additional funding.

Slattery said he would have to leave shortly to join a faculty meeting, but he wanted to emphasize that the student voice is essential in this process, in this Council and all the way up to the Board of Trustees and the legislature. He said getting to work with students has been part of the joy of participating in this group, and the voice of the students has been really meaningful and successful at all levels. Walsh agreed and said the Oregon Student Association is really key in the process too.

[Slattery left]

Walsh said that those who have been to the capital can attest to the fact that the people there really want to hear from the students.

Walsh said it might be useful to mention the tuition thresholds that would trigger different HECC requirements, though these thresholds would not be a reason to change the Council's recommendation. An increase in tuition between 3% and 4.99% would require us to notify the HECC; an increase of 5% or above would mean SOU would have to actually go before the HECC. Perkinson noted that the percentage being discussed is a composite rate which includes tuition and mandatory fees.

The meeting ended at 10:22am.