

**Tuition Advisory Council**  
Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024

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

- Demetrius Davis-Boucher – Student
- ✓ Derek Keller – Faculty Member
- Erica Knotts – Faculty Member
- ✓ Josh Lovern – Director of Budget and Planning
- Elena Pereira – Student
- ✓ Matt Stillman – Administrator
- ✓ Rook Smith - Student
- ✓ Casey Shillam – (Chair) Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- ✓ Neil Woolf – Chair Vice President of Enrollment Management

**Guest Presenters**

-----

The meeting started at 12:00pm.

**Summary**

**Meeting Minutes Not Approved**

Meeting minutes were unable to be approved due to lack of voting members.

SOU's new Provost, Casey Shillam, introduced herself to the group. Lovern outlined the timeline for the next Board meeting and suggested wrapping up fee decision discussions in the next two weeks. He also proposed discussing potential scenarios in the pro forma. The team discussed the adjustment of headcounts and potential changes to tuition rates, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a balance between income and expenses. Lovern highlighted an improvement in the current academic year's financial situation and updates to the pro forma, including a ratified agreement with the classified union and adjustments to retirement and healthcare rates. The team also discussed the recent increase in admissions and the impact it may have on revenues. Shillam expressed concerns about how students might perceive a tuition increase and suggested having a discussion to understand their perspective better.

**Discussing Financial Aspects and Fees Visualization**

Kellar expressed interest particularly regarding the allocation of funds and its impact on operations. Shillam raised a procedural question about attaining a quorum and the tight timeline for coming up with recommendations for the board. Lovern suggested building scenarios to help visualize different situations and the team discussed potential changes to tuition rates and fees, considering the impact

on students' "pocketbook" and accessibility. Woolf suggested examining the single fee concept, and Kellar raised the question of what fees students value most. Lovern revealed a new concept for assessing fees, which aims to address student needs and concerns. The team agreed to further discuss and potentially implement these changes. Towards the end, Lovern shared a student fee concept, while acknowledging concerns about increasing tuition costs without enhancing the Financial Aid Office. Lovern and Stillman discussed proposals to simplify the fee collection and assessment mechanism. They considered consolidating multiple enrollment fees into a single rate per student credit hour, to simplify the fee structure for students taking different course modalities. They also discussed the issue of students taking multiple course modalities and how it affects their fee payments. Stillman expressed concerns about the financial barriers to recruiting community members and industry professionals to take coursework at SOU, due to the high cost of a single course or credit hour. Lovern highlighted the need for stabilization in fee areas due to the shift of students towards online courses. They agreed on the need to simplify the system to make it easier for everyone to understand student finances and potentially shift staff to other tasks supporting students. They also mentioned the process of reverse engineering the distribution for the academic year of 2022-2023.

Lovern talked about a new budget model for the institution believing it could attract a different demographic of students and position the institution for future success. The team compared their approach to other institutions and discussed data on different credit thresholds. They also introduced a new initiative that would allow students to take individual courses instead of full degrees, which they believe could make education more accessible and marketable. The team agreed to present this initiative to the Faculty Senate for feedback.

The meeting ended at 1:30pm.