

## Tuition Advisory Council

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

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

- ✓ Erica Knotts – Faculty Member
- ✓ Josh Lovern – Director of Budget and Planning
- ✓ Kayla Gaches – Student
- Derek Keller – Faculty Member
- Michael Stilson – Student
- ✓ Stephanie Hanigan – Associate Director of Business Services & Bursar
- Fiala Noyes - Student
- Dylan Straley – Student
- ✓ Carson Howell – (Co-Chair) Vice President of Finance & Administration
- ✓ Casey Shillam – (Co-Chair) Provost and Executive Vice President

The meeting started at 12:00pm.

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### Discussion Highlights

#### 1. Welcome and Introductions

- Casey welcomed everyone; attendees briefly exchanged remarks about weather and upcoming spring break.

#### 2. Legislative & Budget Context

- The group acknowledged frustration over pending information from the legislature about state funding levels. They hoped for news within the next week or so but recognized uncertainty.
- **Potential Backup:** If final state funding information is delayed, the Council might present multiple tuition scenarios (e.g., high/medium/low) to the Board of Trustees.

#### 3. Budget Training & Checklist Review

- Josh delivered the final segment of required TAC training, covering:
  - Comparison of SOU's tuition to other Oregon public universities.
  - Housing updates (though not subject to TAC vote).
  - Modeling of student credit hour (SCH) projections.
  - Key cost drivers (utilities, bargaining, bad debt, etc.).
- Josh shared a compliance checklist demonstrating that TAC has covered necessary training topics (budgeting, appropriations, tuition/fee modeling).

#### 4. Modeling Tuition Rate Scenarios

- Josh illustrated how different tuition percentage increases (e.g., 0%, 5%, 8.85%, 10%) affect SOU's budget forecasts and ending fund balance.
- **Key Points from Discussion:**
  - At ~8.85% increase for resident undergraduates, SOU's operational gap decreases but the ending fund balance remains only slightly above 1%.
  - A 0% increase would further erode fund balance, creating a larger structural deficit.

- Some fees (Rec Center, Health Services) are locked this year due to existing contracts. Student fee committees and internal negotiations will influence overall cost to students.
  - There was curiosity about raising specific discounted tuition categories (e.g., Advanced Southern Credit, early entry), but any change may require contract reviews and might not yield large enough revenue offsets.
5. **Communication & Messaging to Students**
- Kayla and Erica emphasized the importance of clearly explaining the tuition increase's rationale.
  - Suggested approach for student outreach:
    - Show what 0% increase means (i.e., the budget hole it creates).
    - Emphasize how each incremental increase (e.g., +\$15 per credit) affects students.
    - Make clear the potential impact on student services and institutional stability.
6. **Timeline & Next Steps**
- **Meeting Calendar:**
    - A meeting previously scheduled for Thursday (same week as transcript) will be canceled due to lack of legislative budget clarity.
    - Next TAC meeting is on **April 3rd**.
  - **Goal:** Finalize tuition recommendation at or around the April 3rd meeting so materials can be prepared for the Board of Trustees.
  - If no state budget update arrives by then, TAC may present multiple tuition scenarios to the Board.

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## Action Items

1. **Legislative Update**
  - The committee will watch for state budget news. If funding remains unclear, TAC will consider multiple "if-then" tuition scenarios.
2. **Refined Tuition Scenarios**
  - Josh will update the tuition modeling spreadsheet to reflect single-fee-credit-hour language for clarity.
3. **Communication Strategy**
  - Kayla, Erica, and others will provide feedback on messaging to students.
  - The plan is to illustrate outcomes of various tuition scenarios (e.g., 0% vs. 8.85%) and tie them to university services and budget sustainability.
4. **Meeting Schedule**
  - **Thursday's meeting** (the same week) is canceled.
  - **Next Meeting:** April 3rd. TAC aims to finalize a recommendation to the President/Boar