

Tuition Advisory Council (TAC)

Meeting Date: March 7, 2026

Prepared From: TAC meeting transcript

1. Purpose of the Meeting

The Tuition Advisory Council convened to begin the annual tuition review and recommendation process for Southern Oregon University. The meeting focused on:

- Providing an overview of the tuition-setting process
- Reviewing the university budget framework
- Understanding cost drivers affecting tuition
- Discussing financial aid and affordability considerations
- Introducing potential tuition rate scenarios
- Preparing members for future deliberations and recommendations

The council's role is to analyze financial data and provide a tuition recommendation to the President, who then presents a final recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

2. Meeting Structure and Orientation

The meeting began with introductions of council members representing:

- Academic leadership
- Financial administration
- Faculty
- Student leadership
- Financial aid
- Academic administration

To ensure transparency and accessibility, the facilitator emphasized minimizing jargon and explaining technical financial terminology so all participants—particularly student representatives—can fully engage in the discussion.

The meeting included a comprehensive presentation covering:

1. Budget and financial overview
2. Tuition policy and regulations

3. Cost management considerations
 4. Tuition rate modeling
 5. Sensitivity and scenario analysis
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3. Overview of the Tuition Advisory Council Process

The Tuition Advisory Council serves as an advisory body responsible for evaluating tuition proposals.

Key elements of the TAC process include:

- Reviewing university financial conditions and budget needs
- Evaluating tuition rate scenarios
- Considering student affordability and financial aid impacts
- Gathering campus input through forums and communication
- Providing a formal recommendation to the President

The President then reviews the recommendation and presents it to the Board of Trustees, who make the final decision regarding tuition rates.

4. University Budget Context

A major portion of the meeting focused on explaining the **financial structure of the university budget** and how tuition revenue supports institutional operations.

Major components of university funding include:

- Tuition and mandatory student fees
- State appropriations
- Grants and contracts
- Auxiliary and enterprise revenue
- Philanthropic support

Tuition revenue represents a significant portion of the university's operating budget, making the tuition-setting process critical for maintaining financial sustainability.

5. Key Cost Drivers

Several factors influencing institutional expenses and tuition considerations were discussed.

Major cost drivers include:

- Personnel costs (faculty and staff salaries and benefits)
- Inflation and operational expenses
- Academic program delivery costs
- Facilities maintenance and infrastructure
- Technology investments
- Compliance and regulatory requirements

Council members reviewed how these factors impact the overall cost structure of the university and influence tuition modeling.

6. Enrollment and Revenue Considerations

Enrollment trends and student credit hours were identified as critical variables in tuition revenue projections.

Important concepts introduced:

- Student Credit Hours (SCH) as a key revenue metric
- Enrollment assumptions used in financial models
- The relationship between enrollment stability and tuition rates

Changes in enrollment levels can significantly impact tuition revenue projections and therefore affect the tuition rate required to balance the budget.

7. Financial Aid and Affordability

The discussion emphasized the importance of balancing institutional financial needs with student affordability.

Topics included:

- Institutional financial aid commitments
- The role of tuition revenue in funding scholarships

- How tuition increases affect student financial aid eligibility
- Strategies to support access for students with financial need

Council members acknowledged that tuition decisions must consider equity and access for current and prospective students.

8. Tuition Rate Modeling

Participants were introduced to the university's **tuition modeling process**, which includes:

- Multiple tuition increase scenarios
- Revenue projections under different enrollment assumptions
- Financial sustainability considerations
- Impact on student cost of attendance

The council will evaluate these models in upcoming meetings to determine which scenario best balances financial stability and affordability.

9. Cost Management Options

The presentation also addressed potential cost containment strategies, including:

- Operational efficiencies
- Strategic budget reductions
- Program prioritization
- Resource allocation adjustments

These options are considered alongside tuition increases to ensure the university is responsibly managing expenses.

10. Next Steps in the TAC Process

The council will continue its work over several upcoming meetings.

Next steps include:

- Reviewing updated financial projections

- Evaluating specific tuition rate proposals
- Gathering feedback from the campus community
- Refining tuition scenarios and financial models
- Developing a formal tuition recommendation

Campus forums and stakeholder engagement will also play a role in informing the council's deliberations.

11. Key Takeaways

- The Tuition Advisory Council plays a critical role in advising on tuition decisions.
- Tuition revenue is essential to maintaining university operations and academic programs.
- Budget pressures, enrollment trends, and inflation are significant drivers of tuition considerations.
- Financial aid and student affordability remain central considerations in the decision-making process.
- The council will continue reviewing data and modeling scenarios before making a recommendation to the President.