



**MEETING OF THE WOU BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MEETING NO. 40 – MAY 12, 2021
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM**

MEETING MINUTES

I. CALL-TO-MEETING / ROLL CALL

Chair Betty Komp called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM and asked Secretary Hagemann to take roll. The following trustees were present:

Zellee Allen (joined at 1:13 PM)
Jerry Ambris
Jaime Arredondo
Jim Baumgartner (joined at 1:11 PM)
Danielle Campbell (joined at 1:10 PM)
Susan Castillo
Gayle Evans
David Foster (joined at 1:10 PM)
Rex Fuller
Linda Herrera (joined at 1:15 PM)
Betty Komp
Cec Koontz
Malissa Larson
Lean Mitchell
Doug Morse

II. CHAIR'S WELCOME

Chair Komp welcomed the Board and audience to the special board meeting. Komp explained that the meeting was organized after a floor motion at the April 21, 2021 board meeting to hear more information about student needs and concerns. She shared that the Board modified its public comment policies in order to organize the meeting to hear from as many students that had signed up for the meeting. Komp acknowledged that there would be no action or motions at the special meeting because it was a listening session for students.

III. STUDENT PUBLIC COMMENT

Eight students signed up to offer public comment to the Board.

First, NJ Johnson, ASWOU president, addressed the Board. He thanked the Board for the opportunity and emphasized that it presented an opportunity for the Board and students to engage at a deeper level which, in turn, would lead to a greater understanding of student needs. He noted many of issues facing students—ranging from tuition to mental health struggles to the pandemic to student consultation—and observed that intentional communication and gathering input would be a positive development.



Makana Waikiki, the IFC Chair, was next. She thanked the Board for the opportunity to continue the conversation from the April board meeting and stressed that it was important for students to have a voice at the table. She applauded student voices and returned to the student needs presentation that she offered at the April 21, 2021 board meeting. She acknowledged the DEI task force organized by President Fuller and shared that she was a member of the task force. She briefly reminded the Board of the elements of the Freedom Center proposal that she made previously.

Chair Komp recognized Devin Fenton next. Fenton introduced himself as a graduate student in Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling. He expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to address the Board directly and lamented that the sentiments about the university had diminished. He described that he had seen people harmed because of their cultural background, gender or race while he was a student. He stressed the need to listen to students when they expressed their needs. Fenton also noted that experts might be useful for the university in working through some of the outstanding issues. Chair Komp asked Fenton if he was offering testimony for a committee or other group on campus and Fenton shared that he was presenting to the Board as a student.

Elizabeth Braatz addressed the Board next. She introduced herself and thanked the Board for the opportunity to discuss student needs. Braatz shared a personal story about overcoming her disability to attend college. She continued to describe walking through campus and observing a truck drive through campus with a Confederate flag and offered it was a chilling and uncomfortable experience. Braatz offered, though, that the university needed to focus on the future. She stressed the need to assist students of color and advocated that the Freedom Center was necessary. She concluded that if WOU wanted to be more equitable and inclusive, it needed to show it with words and actions.

Komp asked Bethanie Altamirano for her comments. Altamirano shared that she grew up in nearby Independence and that the university had provided her with many opportunities that she would not otherwise have. She shared that athletics and her coach pushed her to places where she would have not otherwise been. She stressed that the university could be even more successful if it expanded student diversity. Altamirano stated that a diverse student body would benefit the entire WOU community.

Arlette Tapia shared her comments with the Board next. Tapia introduced herself as the ASWOU Director of Multicultural Advocacy and shared her support for the Freedom Center proposal presented at the April 21, 2021 board meeting. She observed, from her vantage point as a BIPOC student, there are a lack of resources and space for students. Tapia noted that the Freedom Center proposal had many dimensions and they, collectively, addressed the needs of students. She observed that the last year in particular was stressful for students.

Chair Komp invited Liz Marquez to offer her comments next. Marquez introduced herself as the current ASWOU Senate president and thanked the Board for the opportunity to share her observations. She noted that the Senate was in full support of the student needs proposal. Marquez also offered the necessity of a culturally competent campus. Marquez shared ASWOU Senate Resolution 8.21 with the Board, outlining the need for the development of a HB2864 cultural competence plan. She stressed the need for students to be aware of the



plan and what the administration would prioritize in the development of the plan. Marquez stated the importance of hearing BIPOC student voices.

Chair Komp recognized Logan Jackson as the final student addressing the Board. She introduced herself as a member of the track and field team, Black Student Union president, and incoming ASWOU president. She shared that the track team and Black Student Union, among other groups, created a family for her at the university. She shared that she has seen improvement at the university regarding diversity in the past three years, but there was still much work to do. Jackson offered that the events of the past year were the perfect catalyst to work on problems facing faculty and students of color. She concluded that she looks forward to working with everyone over the coming year.

After the student presentations, trustees shared observations and responses. Trustee Mitchell thanked the students for the heartfelt comments and shared that the experiences would be vital as the university charted the course ahead. Trustee Evans echoed Mitchell's comments and shared that she had follow-up questions. She noted, as a white person mostly from Oregon, she has learned much and that she views her role as one who first recognizes that

Vice Chair Arredondo started by acknowledging the testimony and that he felt the experiences shared with the Board. He noted that the Board and the university were moving in the direction shared by the students. Arredondo noted that it was hard to have such a conversation virtually. Trustee Castillo thanked the students and acknowledged and appreciated their leadership. She noted that she appreciated the information and that the Board would definitely need to follow up. Chair Komp concluded by expressing her deep appreciation for the personal stories of each student that presented to the Board. She asked Hagemann to outline the DEI agenda items for the June board meeting. Hagemann outlined the June board meeting would include a joint presentation from the UDIAC and UCCAC committees, creation of a Board standing committee on diversity, inclusion and equity, and an update on the DEI budget task force.

Trustee Campbell asked Chair Komp if there was time to ask questions of students and Komp clarified that the special board meeting was a listening session. Campbell asked if there would be an action item on the Freedom Center at the June board meeting. Komp restated the campus activities related to the DEI Task Force would likely obviate any need for Board action in June. Waikiki asked Chair Komp about the opportunity for testimony at the June board meeting and Hagemann reiterated standard public comment protocols for all board meetings, including the June 9, 2021 meeting. Trustee Koontz confirmed the opportunity to offer written testimony. Chair Komp concluded the meeting by expressing her appreciation for student engagement.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Komp adjourned the meeting at 1:42 PM with a quorum of the Board.



Western Oregon UNIVERSITY

Ryan James Hagemann
Secretary to the Board of Trustees