



**WOU BOARD OF TRUSTEES RETREAT
MEETING NO. 53
SEPTEMBER 1, 2022 | 2:00PM-5:00PM
SEPTEMBER 2, 2022 | 9:00AM-4:00PM
WOU:SALEM, 525 Trade Street, Salem, Oregon**

MINUTES

Thursday, September 1

I. Call-to-meeting | Roll Call

Chair Komp called the retreat meeting to order at 2:15 PM and asked Secretary Hagemann to take roll. The following trustees were present:

Jerry Ambris
Gayle Evans (arrived at 2:47 PM)
Angela Fasana
David Foster
Betty Komp
Cec Koontz
Doug Morse
Kari Nelsestuen
Jesse Peters
Michael Reis

The following trustees were absent:

Zellee Allen
Danielle Campbell
Susan Castillo
Linda Herrera
Leah Mitchell

II. Introductions

Komp asked President Peters to kick off the retreat with some observations and introductions. Peters and the trustees introduced themselves, as did Executive Director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Dominique Vargas.

III. DEI Training: The Importance of DEI Awareness & Initiatives to Shape the Future of WOU (Dominique Vargas)

After introductions, Vargas engaged the Board in DEI training. She started with a focus on self-reflection and shared guiding principles for the training. She asked trustees to consider several identities and to consider the identities that each trustee thought about



frequently and those identities that the individual trustees did not think about often. She observed that trustees might consider doing this exercise each year to see if there are changes. After self-reflection on various identities, Vargas asked the trustees to continue the self-reflection exercise individually.

After trustees completed the experience, various trustees shared observations about their own identities and vulnerabilities. Several trustees mentioned privilege as a part of their self-reflection and Vargas noted that it was important how individuals used their privilege; it is possible for those in positions of privilege to use that privilege to open doors and create access. Vargas shared self-reflective activities such as those incorporated into the training could be instrumental in breaking down barriers and creating an accessible community at WOU.

After trustees shared various observations, Vargas moved to a second reflective question and provided trustees with the opportunity to review individually. After reflection, several trustees shared their individual observations about the questions.

After the self-reflections, Vargas turned the Board to the Board's own Statement on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility and asked what the statement meant to the trustees individually and as a Board. Trustee Foster offered that everyone in the WOU community should have the opportunity to be who they are. Komp stressed accessibility. Trustee Koontz shared personal reflections about her education. Peters noted that HSI status and DEI work does not work unless the commitment to the values is genuine. Vargas continued, noting the importance of an equity lens in developing policies, procedures and processes for the university. Trustee Nelsestuen observed that an equity lens could be for more than policies and asked the Board to consider how an equity lens might be other initiatives, such as the creation of spaces. Vargas summarized the action steps related to DEIA that the University had accomplished and had planned for the upcoming academic year. The initiatives include creation of the DEIA office, an equity audit, cultural competence work related to HB 2864, and HIS status. Vargas asked trustees if there were any questions.

Nelsestuen inquired about the equity audit. Trustee Evans observed that the Board and University would undertake substantial work in the coming year and that it was important to "clear the fog" and get the information that it needed. She stressed the importance of the Board to exercise change management. Trustee Ambris emphasized the need to be sincere in DEIA work. Morse asked Vargas what she needed from the Board. Vargas noted the sustainability of DEIA work was very important. Evans observed that transparency was key, as well, and that there should be mechanisms in place for the Board to be informed. Peters noted that a part of the retreat was for trustees to get to know him and his accessible leadership style.

IV. How to be a Self-Reflective Board Member – Part 1 (Ernest House, Jr.)

Ernest House, Jr., the retreat facilitator, turned the Board's attention to a conversation about how to be a self-reflective board member. He started with a land acknowledgement and stressed its importance. House posed several questions that the



trustees should review individually and as a Board about their expectations of Board service, including expectations about community with President Peters and the nature of information shared with the Board. House offered several issues with which universities are grappling and whether or not the WOU Board had a perspective on the issues, including the influx of students facing mental health challenges and shared governance. He stressed the notion of creating a runway for the president to tackle initiatives, meet challenges, and foster student success. House asked: What type of Board do you want to be?

House turned the conversation to results from the Board's self-assessment. He shared that he would send out the survey results overnight to trustees and that certain themes, such as onboarding and the identification of new trustees, jumped out. House stated that as trustees reviewed the survey results overnight, it might surface clarifications and questions. House noted that the retreat would return to self-reflective trusteeship in the morning and Peters added that tomorrow's agenda would include his candid observations since his arrival.

Chair Komp recessed the first day of the Board's retreat at 5:11 PM.

Friday, September 2

V. How to be a Self-Reflective Board Member – Part 2 (Ernest House, Jr.)

Chair Komp called the meeting to order and out of recess at 9:08 AM and asked Secretary Hagemann to take the roll. The following trustees were present:

Jerry Ambris
Gayle Evans
David Foster
Betty Komp
Cec Koontz
Doug Morse
Kari Nelsestuen
Jesse Peters
Michael Reis

The following trustees were absent:

Zellee Allen
Danielle Campbell
Susan Castillo
Angela Fasana
Linda Herrera
Leah Mitchell

Komp and Peters turned to House to kick off the second day of the retreat. House asked for Board reflections about the self-assessment materials emailed the previous evening.



Trustee Reis shared that as a new trustee he did not complete the survey, but observed how often the center was selected in the survey questions. Nelsestuen echoed Reis's observations and noted that the results demonstrated different experiences for the trustees. Reis asked the Board if it felt empowered. House asked trustees to identify some ideas that emerged from the survey and which questions that they would like to ask. Komp observed that Board meetings are full of information told to trustees as opposed to information and conversation among trustees. Ambris echoed Komp's observations about a daunting docket. Nelsestuen turned to the strengths and observed, from the survey results, Board meetings are run well, but the Board might turn its attention to community engagement. Peters asked the Board how it might operationalize the survey results. House posed whether or not the Board felt that various voices were heard at meetings. Evans added that the Board asked for a transformational leader and that the Board cannot continue with the current structure; she noted that there was too much engineering and not enough dialogue. Reis echoed Evans's observations and worried about whether or not the Board was handled. He stressed the importance of the Board being conscious about its customs. Komp and Evans discussed working with campus stakeholders. Morse shared that the conversation was great and that good boards do two things well: Boards know what their role is and they know what the institutional priorities are. Trustee Foster echoed Morse's observations and reflected on what his role was as a trustee.

House summarized the conversation and turned to how the Board could assist with an effective presidential onboarding. Nelsestuen contributed that the Board cannot suffer some "solutionitis"; rather, the Board should figure out what the problem is before searching for a solution. Evans thought the Board should share the presidential prospectus with the new trustees. Reis suggested field trips. Peters wondered about whether two-day Board meetings would give trustees more opportunity to engage the community and get to know each other. Evans discussed the guiding principles of the presidential search and how stakeholders worked well together. Komp turned the Board's attention to the strategic plan and Reis noted that prior accreditation work might be useful. Evans wondered if the strategic plan should be revisited annually. Peters noted that the current plan was set to expire and that a new plan might take a different, more succinct form.

Evans continued, observing that the university's vice presidents should be clear and empowered. She also suggested that trustees might attend one committee meeting of a committee of which they are not a member. Reis shared purposeful work from the PSU Board of Trustees on culture. Morse reflected on the dialogue and that vice presidents play a role in keeping the Board informed and Koontz added that building those relationships builds trust.

After the self-reflective Board member conversation, Komp and House announced a break before turning to President Peters' early observation and broad vision for the university.



VI. Early Observations and Broad Vision (President Peters)

After the break, Peters provided a high-level overview of some of the early observations, opportunities, and challenges he has seen thus far. He presented institution challenges like staff vacancies and enrollment decline but also offered opportunities for further discussion like increased teacher education programs to address the national teacher shortage to finalizing the Hispanic Serving Institution designation process. Peters offered additional strategies for success by leveraging university space in Salem, OR and EAB partnerships.

Turning to observations for each of the Board-identified priorities, Peters offered the following:

Campus Culture & Climate

1. Strong commitment to student success
2. Positive approach to DEI and HSI status
3. Good energy to move forward
4. Some denial of enrollment decline and budget issues

Campus Morale

1. Unclassified Staff – Improved with recent raise
2. Some tension between administration and staff/faculty

Strategic Planning

1. We need an inclusive process
2. We need a quick process
3. We need a simple plan with grounding ideals from which we develop actions
4. We need to define identity and differentiation

Enrollment Growth

1. Searching for a permanent Director of Admissions
2. We need larger market share of a declining funnel of students
3. We need data driven decisions and strategies
4. We need to articulate how we support the students we seek to attract
5. We need a strong MarCom unit to drive messaging and branding across the institution

Comprehensive Campaign

1. Great opportunities for growth in this area
2. Must hire VP of Advancement
3. Must use President, cabinet, faculty, trustees, etc. in strategic ways

Current Key Vacancies:



1. VP of Advancement
2. Director of Marketing and Communications
3. PIO and Director of Social Media
4. Director of Admissions
5. Director of HR
6. Assistant Director of HR
7. Director of Government Relations
8. Title IX Coordinator

Strategies for Success:

1. WOU Salem – Graduate Programs, Degree Completion, Space Rental
2. EAB Partnerships for Enrollment
3. Strong Leaders in MarCom & Admissions
4. HSI Status and Inclusive Campus – Identity & Brand Grounded in DEI Initiatives
5. OTD Program – Medical Industries
6. COPLAC Membership – Identity Differentiation
7. Grants – Title III
8. Branding / Messaging / Identity / Student Support

VII. The Role of the Board of Trustees in Presidential & Institutional Success
(Ernest House, Jr.)

After a lengthy conversation regarding Peters' early observations and broad vision, House moved the trustees to lunch and the breakout groups to identify the main challenges and strategies for success.

VIII. Lunch

IX. Identify Main Challenges and Strategies for Success - Breakout Groups
(Ernest House, Jr.)

- **Campus Culture & Climate**
- **Campus Morale**
- **Strategic Planning**
- **Enrollment Growth**
- **Comprehensive Campaign**

Trustees divided into small groups to discuss the Board's priorities. One group discussed campus culture, climate, and morale, a second group tackled enrollment, and the final group looked at the strategic plan and the comprehensive campaign.

X. Breakout Groups Report / Discussion (Ernest House, Jr.)



House asked for reports from each of the breakout session. Morse started with the enrollment breakout group. He observed that among the challenges was to understand what was driving the decline in enrolment and that the first step should be the collection of data. Morse noted that any solution to enrollment declines must be data-driven. Morse stated that the institution should review successes and failures and whether or not they are unique to WOU. Morse also noted that the university should consider the new expectations of students. Foster added that programs and curriculum should be faculty-driven and that the DPT and OPT proposals were an example of a faculty-driven proposal. House offered that the enrollment observations were why strategic planning was so important. Komp asked about HECC and any responsibility regarding the DPT or OPT proposals. Reis inquired about budget infrastructure and process regarding new programs and Foster agreed with the comments.

House asked Trustee Ambris for a report-out of the strategic planning and comprehensive campaign group. Ambris started with that the university should not make any promises that it cannot complete and that a strategic plan was very important. Nelsestuen mentioned that strategic plans have different audiences. Ambris noted that retention should be a part of the enrollment conversations and that, because we have never completed a comprehensive campaign, it would be critical to ensure it was right-sized. He also added that it might be helpful to have a roadmap with intermediate steps for the new strategic plan. Nelsestuen inquired as to the applicability of an equity lens on the new strategic plan.

Evans shared information from the campus climate culture/morale/climate breakout group. She observed that the conversation had come full circle and that it would be critical to bring everyone along in the development of the strategic plan. She stressed the significance of infusing the strategic plan with the university's DEIA imperative. Turning to strategies, Evans offered helping the president with visibility and accessibility and resource issues. Reis shared that trust and grace were critical elements to any engagement of campus culture/morale/climate conversations and used the quasi-endowment/unclassified salaries issue as an example. Evans stated that a consistent, transparent message was important to trust. Peters, Evans, and Koontz discussed budget literacy and the centrality of understanding budget reality. Morse noted that it would be difficult to share complicated budget scenarios with campus and Evans stated that a safe, open forum for campus to discuss the budget was advisable. Reis echoed that it was necessary to work with people. Evans asked if the university needed a new budget model and Peters observed it would be a drastic cut if the university right-sized to its current enrollment.

XI. Recap and Adjourn

House summarized the Board's deliberations and asked how the Board wanted the university to look. Peters added that WOU is a strong community and it should embrace its identify in moving forward.

Komp adjourned the retreat with quorum at 3:02 PM.



Western Oregon UNIVERSITY

RYAN JAMES HAGEMANN
Secretary to the Board of Trustees