

**South Puget Sound Community College  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
SPECIAL MEETING: STUDY SESSION  
MINUTES  
Tuesday, February 4, 2025  
Building 1-Room 194  
TwinStar Community Foundation Event Center  
4220 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. SE  
Lacey, WA 98503**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Board Chair Steven Drew called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Trustee Doug Mah, Trustee Steven Drew, Trustee Jeff Davis, Trustee Judy Hartmann, and Trustee Rozanne Garman were present. Elizabeth McAmis, Assistant Attorney General, Education Division, was present on behalf of Justin Kjolseth, Assistant Attorney General.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 1:30 p.m. Board Chair Drew announced that the Board was going into Executive Session to review the performance of a public employee ((RCW 42.30.110(1)(g))), and no action would be taken by the Board during the Executive Session.

**BREAK** 2:15-2:30 p.m.

**RECONVENE REGULAR MEETING**

The regular meeting reconvened at 2:30 p.m. The Board was in Executive Session to review the performance of a public employee. There was no action taken by the Board.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

It was moved by Trustee Hartmann seconded by Trustee Mah, and carried **THAT THE FOLLOWING CONSENT AGENDA BE APPROVED:**

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA****A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

- January 14, 2025 regular board meeting

**B. MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES**

- ACCT National Legislative Summit, February 9-12, 2025, Washington, DC
- ACT Trustee Tuesday, March 11, 2025, Virtual

**C. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**D. DATE OF THE NEXT BOARD MEETING**

Regular Meeting

March 11, 2025

2:30-4:30 p.m.

South Puget Sound Community College

2011 Mottman Road, S.W.

Olympia, WA 98512-6292

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chair Drew announced, "Board Policy 105 (*Meetings*) allows for oral comments or questions by members of the public on any matter relevant to its responsibilities and duties in the operations of the college. Consistent with this policy, comments may be limited to three minutes per person. The board is here to listen and typically does not respond and/or engage in public comments. We will now hear from individuals who wish to comment."

There were no comments.

**BOARD SPECIAL COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS**

- ACT Legislative Action Committee (LAC): Trustee Doug Mah--primary; Trustee Steven Drew--secondary
  - Trustee Mah reported:
    - Preparation for the ACCT National Legislative Summit in February has been underway. The state association has a list of federal priorities that happen to coincide and align well with AACC and ACCT's legislative agenda.
    - Focus areas: Pell Grant, basic need support, job training, workforce development, Higher Education Act. Other focus areas: advocate for items supported by Washington State's legislative agenda; support community colleges and students within the budget reconciliation process; strengthen Workforce Development and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA); support short-term health grants; Issues around ending the taxation on certain programs and modifying the American Opportunity tax credit; focus on rural community colleges in relation to the unpassed farm bill; and enact the Dream Act to support undocumented students.
    - There was discussion on the Higher Education Reauthorization Act proposal and risk sharing: Opposition to proposals shifting financial risks and placing financial burden on community colleges.
- Board Finance Committee: Trustee Jeff Davis--primary; Trustee Doug Mah--secondary
  - Trustee Davis reported:
    - The Board Finance Committee met on January 28 and discussed the annual financial audit. Also, the student housing proposal was discussed and language solidified.

- The detailed report from Dr. Tysha Tolefree would come later in the agenda. He deferred comments until those topics.
- Foundation Board: Trustee Judy Hartmann--primary; Trustee Rozanne Garman—secondary
  - Trustee Hartmann reported:
    - The Foundation Board had a half-day retreat at the end of January, where they reviewed reports and data and discussed:
      - Information on student success due to grants and scholarships.
      - Work to identify and contextualize variations in fundraising results such as large gifts or campaign efforts.
      - Areas of Focus: Donors, funds, events, campus giving, board giving, endowments, scholarships, and communication with the public.
      - Strategic Plan Goals: The Foundation aims to meet all unmet student financial needs, engage the community, and address emerging student and college needs through world-class fundraising.
      - Involvement in Strategic Goals: Discussions on the Foundation Board taking a more active role in Foundation activities.
      - Donor Participation: 2023: 883 donors; 2024: 932 donors
      - The Foundation Board is looking into more comprehensive data and will have another iteration in March.

## REPORT FROM THE COLLEGE PRESIDENT

- Dr. Stokes called on Carlea McAvoy, Math Professor and President of the Faculty Union, who reported that the Faculty Union has a contingency of faculty that is going to Lobby Day on the Hill on February 17. AFT will be there all day talking to legislators, promoting most of the same things that presidents and trustees promote when they are talking to legislators.
- She introduced Dr. Heidi Aijala, Learning Resource Center Administrator, student workers in the Learning Support Center, Andy Nguyen and Calla Lamenzo, and Matt Ito, English Professor. This group discussed the Embedded Tutors Program, its impact and reach, student and tutor experiences, faculty perspective, and program expansion.

The Embedded Tutors Program at SPSCC is designed to provide additional support for students, especially those in pre-college courses. Dr. Aijala explained that the program aims to create inclusive learning spaces and empower students to become independent learners. The program includes embedded, in-person, and e-tutoring across various subjects, such as reading, writing, math, science, and accounting.

The program serves approximately one out of every five students, with many students making multiple visits to the learning centers. The average visit time in Fall 2024 was 90 minutes per student, indicating high engagement with the services. In English 101 and Math 97 classes, the program has been re-established to improve overall course success rates and reduce gaps for historically-underrepresented students. The embedded tutors not only assist in the classroom, but also help students gain confidence and seek further tutoring resources. They foster a sense of community and belonging, which is crucial for student success.

Andy Nguyen and Calla Lamenzo, both embedded writing tutors, shared their positive experiences. They highlighted the program's role in reducing student stress and increasing classroom connectivity, emphasized the importance of building relationships and helping students navigate their learning journeys.

Matt Ito, English professor and faculty liaison, discussed the program's role in fostering student success, retention, and completion. He noted that the program's collaborative pedagogies help students engage with their communities and discourses. Tutors provide unique perspectives and help bridge the student-teacher power dynamic, enhancing the learning experience for all.

The program's success has led to calls for expansion, particularly in math classrooms. The embedded tutors help students feel more comfortable seeking assistance, knowing they have a familiar face waiting for them at the learning centers.

In response to a question about addressing Artificial Intelligence (AI) challenges, the group shared that the tutors also navigate challenges related to AI tools like ChatGPT. They emphasize the importance of students developing their own ideas and maintaining academic integrity. Tutors work with students to ensure they understand their professors' policies and focus on authentic learning.

Dr. Stokes reported the following:

- Enrollment Increases: Overall activities increased by 14%; Running Start program up by 10%; International students increased by 23%; ESL student enrollment up by 25%.
- Legislative Efforts: there is work on a bill to allow waiving the first 15 credits of tuition for Adult Basic Education or ESL students to get them on financial aid.
- Washington State Board for Nursing (WABON) update: There are efforts by WACTC to address WABON's issues of discrimination and improve representation of community college programs.
- In response to, and to focus on the impact of federal executive orders, the Executive Team has started meeting three times a week.
- Tribes working on real estate projects that will have significant economic impact and job creation in the community: Development of a casino and conference center at Exit 99, expected to create 700 additional jobs. Another project by the Nisqually with 1200 new jobs anticipated.

- Dr. Michelle Andreas, Vice President for Instruction, is working to move forward in the development of a Bachelor's of Applied Science in Tribal Enterprise Management.
- The college will pause its Bachelor of Science in Brewing and Distilling program for five years. They will reuse visioning work from the program for a new BAS. Noel Rubadue, Dean of Corporate & Continuing Education, is working to move forward with an Associate's Degree in Hospitality and Tribal Enterprises to feed into the new Bachelor's program. The focus will be on programs tailored to tribes' employment needs.

**POLICY** No Report.

**BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS** No Report.

## **BUDGET AND FINANCE**

### **FY23 Annual Financial Statement Audit**

Dr. Tysha Tolefree, Vice President for Finance and Operations, and Parminder Kaur, Associate Vice President for Finance, discussed the outcome of the FY23 College Financial Statement Audit. The audit started on July 1, 2024 and completed in December 2024. The audit noted a material weakness in two main areas regarding the college's annual financial reporting.

- **Material Weakness:** Identified in annual financial reporting, particularly in internal controls and annual financial statement (asset classification). Recommendations by the State Auditor's office included: enhance internal controls, staff training and resources, review processes, and resource allocation.
- To address these issues, the college has implemented the following corrective measures:
  - Enhanced reconciliation processes have been implemented.
  - Additional training for staff in SBCTC's year-end training programs and additional external training opportunities in governmental accounting, GAAP, and GASB standards.
  - The College plans to hire a senior accountant to assist with financial statement preparation and to regularly verify financial data in coordination with SBCTC.
  - Developed comprehensive standard operating procedures and reviewed processes for the processing of cash and asset management transactions.

### **Student Housing Update**

Dr. Tolefree presented the assumptions and parameters conferred by the Board for the

next steps toward a successful student housing development project.

The College and the Board agree to the following steps:

- RFP Preparation: The College will prepare a Request for Proposal (RFP) to procure a national non-profit specializing in student housing development.
- Ground Lease Negotiation: The College will negotiate a Ground Lease between the selected 501(c)(3) non-profit and the College.
- Grant Agreement: The College will negotiate a Grant Agreement with the 501(c)(3) non-profit for operational expense contributions post-construction, with a fixed period of up to 10 years and a maximum of \$6.6 million.
- The College will continue to work with experts in the field to ensure project success.
- Authority: Dr. Tysha Tolefree, Vice President for Finance & Operations, is authorized to enter future agreements in consultation with the College President and agreement by the Board of Trustees.

It was moved by Trustee Mah and seconded by Trustee Davis **THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE STUDENT HOUSING PROJECT ASSUMPTIONS AND FRAMEWORK SET FORTH IN THE STAFF REPORT PRESENTED IN TAB 4. THE MOTION CARRIES.**

## **STUDY SESSION**

### Core Theme 1: Student Achievement

Dr. Dave Pelkey, Vice President for Student Services; Dr. Michelle Andreas, Vice President for Instruction; and Jennifer Tuia, Director of Institutional Research, provided an update on Core Theme 1, which highlighted the progress and challenges of student achievement. They reviewed various measures of student success, strategic initiatives, and future plans to enhance student outcomes.

#### Goal 1: Increase Student Persistence

- Measure 1.1.1: Students transitioning from basic skills to pre-college/college-level math decreased from 29.2% to 18.9%
- Measure 1.1.2: Transition from 0 to 15 college-level credits increased to 31.6%
- Measure 1.1.3: Transition from 30 to 45 college-level credits saw a slight decrease to 47.7%.
- Measure 1.1.4: Completion of college-level math within the first year dropped to 34%
- Measure 1.1.5: Continuous enrollment during the first academic year improved to 83.5%

#### Goal 2: Increase Certificate and Degree Completion

- Measure 1.2.1: Graduation within three years slightly decreased to 39.5%

**Goal 3: Increase Job Placement for Workforce Education Students**

- Measure 1.3.1: Employment within 12 months post-graduation improved to 77%

**Key Initiatives and Strategies:**

- Accessibility: Efforts to make learning materials accessible to all students have been a major focus.
- Culturally Inclusive Pedagogy: Expanding inclusive teaching practices and assessments across the curriculum.
- College-Wide Abilities Review: Re-instituting the review process for new college-wide abilities.
- Adjunct Engagement: Implementing a mentoring program for adjunct faculty to enhance their involvement.
- I-BEST Program Expansion: Continuing to grow the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) options.
- Climate Solutions: Integrating climate awareness and solutions into the curriculum through a statewide grant.
- Tribal Stewards Program: Collaborating with tribal communities to support their educational needs and steward programs in STEM fields.
- Bachelor of Science in Computer Science: Partnering with Grays Harbor to build and promote this degree program.
- Evening/Weekend Nursing Program: Successfully launched with high student interest and participation.
- Ed Planners: Adding more educational planners to reduce advising loads and wait times.
- Compass Software Updates: Enhancing mobile compatibility and support features for students.
- Early Alert System: Refining the system to provide timely support and awareness for students, potentially renaming it to CARE.
- Transfer Connections: Expanding transfer support and agreements with institutions like The Evergreen State College and University of Washington.
- Career Connections: Boosting career fairs, job placement support, and leveraging the Handshake software for job postings.
- Financial Aid Communication: Increasing efforts to communicate and support financial aid processes through various partnerships and navigators.

**High School+ Program**

Annamary Fitzgerald, Adult Basic Education Professor and Jennifer Barber, Dean of Transition Studies, and Walt Mehring, Adult Learner Transition Specialist, presented on the High School+ Program at the College.

**Program Structure and Locations:**

- Offered at Olympia and Lacey campuses, Yelm Extension School, and with several tribal partners (Nisqually, Squaxin, Skokomish, Chehalis).
- Sound Learning (a community-based organization in Shelton) and the Shelton C.H.O.I.C.E program also offer HS+ curriculum.

- Programs are designed to be flexible, allowing students to progress at their own pace and continue their education without having to redo completed work.

The High School Completion program offers two main options for students: GED Preparation and High School Plus (HS+). This program is designed to provide flexible and accessible education for students ranging from ages 16 to 65+, with a significant portion of participants being under 30 years old.

GED Preparation: This program prepares students for the GED test, which includes four subject areas (Reasoning through Language Arts, Mathematical Reasoning, Social Studies, and Science). The tests are computer-based, timed, and require digital literacy skills. SPSCC is an authorized testing site, and this program is the only option available for students aged 16 and 17 who choose to work outside the traditional K-12 system.

High School Plus (HS+): This competency-based high school diploma program is available to students aged 18 and older. It was established as an alternative to the GED and is now offered at all 34 community colleges. The program allows students to earn credits through prior learning assessments, subject-specific coursework, and project-based learning. Students must earn a minimum of 70%, with the opportunity to revise their work to improve scores. Since its inception in 2014, the HS+ program has granted 2,053 diplomas.

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION** No Report.

**COMMENTS FROM INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** None.

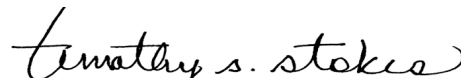
**ACTION ITEM FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION** None.

**ADJOURNMENT** 4:58 P.M.



---

STEVEN DREW, BOARD CHAIR  
SOUTH PUGET SOUND COMMUNITY COLLEGE



---

TIMOTHY STOKES, SECRETARY  
SOUTH PUGET SOUND COMMUNITY COLLEGE