

**South Puget Sound Community College  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
REGULAR MEETING  
Tuesday, December 9, 2025  
Building 25-Boardroom  
South Puget Sound Community College  
2011 Mottman Road, S.W.  
Olympia, WA 98512-6292**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Board Chair Judy Hartmann called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m.

The meeting began with Chair Hartmann's introduction of new trustee, Mark Brown, who brings extensive experience from other organizations including legislative work and community leadership. The board welcomed Trustee Brown.

**ROLL CALL**

Trustee Judy Hartmann, Trustee Steven Drew, and Trustee Rozanne Garman, Trustee Mark Brown, and Trustee Doug Mah were present. Justin Kjolseth, Assistant Attorney General (AAG), was present.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

It was moved by Trustee Drew, seconded by Trustee Mah, and carried **THAT THE FOLLOWING CONSENT AGENDA BE APPROVED. THE MOTION CARRIES.**

**A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

- November 4, 2025 regular board meeting
- November 14, 2025 special board meeting

**B. MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES**

- ACT Trustee Tuesday, ~~January 13~~ January 20, 2025, virtual
- ACCT National Legislative Summit, February 8-11, 2025, Washington DC

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

Regular Meeting  
January 13, 2026  
2:30-4:30 p.m.

South Puget Sound Community College  
2011 Mottman Road, S.W.  
Olympia, WA 98512-6292

**E. 2026-2027 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE****F. 2026-2027 COLLEGE INSTRUCTIONAL CALENDAR**

With the approval of the Consent Agenda, the Board also adopted:

- The 2026-27 Board Meeting Schedule as presented in TAB 1A.
- The 2026-2027 Instructional Calendar as presented in TAB 1B.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chair Hartmann 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:
    - The ACT Trustee Tuesday on January 13 was re-scheduled to January 20, 2026.
    - The ACT Legislative Action Committee meeting is December 11 at noon via Zoom. The meeting agenda includes updates on state and local legislative affairs. He has a meeting conflict, so the trustees were encouraged to join the virtual meeting.
    - December 18 is the expected release date for the governor's supplemental budget proposal. The budget is anticipated to include significant cuts and no new revenue, leading to a challenging and potentially difficult period ahead.
- Board Finance Committee: Trustee Steven Drew--primary
  - Trustee Drew reported:
    - There was a Board Finance Committee meeting and deferred the detailed report to Dr. Tysha Tolefree later in the meeting.
    - He, Dr. Tolefree and Dr. Stokes attended the necessary but routine Audit Meeting with the auditor on December 8, 2025.
- Foundation Board: Trustee Rozanne Garman--primary; Trustee Judy Hartmann--secondary
  - Trustee Garman reported:
    - She attended the first Foundation board meeting as trustee liaison—it was positive and provided opportunities to meet new colleagues.
    - The Foundation is actively engaged in its giving season with significant successes.
    - Staff and faculty contributed over \$57,000 to the Campus Cares initiative in October; \$15,000 supported a matching grant for the \$100,000 Aspen Prize.

- Over \$13,000 was raised through the annual Give Local campaign supporting South Sound non-profits.
- Two new large endowments were established, totaling \$325,000, to benefit students in automotive and dental assisting programs.
- The recent "Brunch with a Purpose" event was sold out, raised \$55,292, and was well-attended by staff and trustees.

## REPORT FROM THE COLLEGE PRESIDENT

- Dr. Stokes called on Elise Garcia, ASB President, who reported:
  - The campus Food Pantry had 630 visits from week 1 to week 11, marking a 49% increase over last fall; this reflects growing community support and need. Collaboration with the food bank continues, including Thanksgiving meals and local donations; ongoing grab-and-go and gift card programs are active. One hundred seventy-four (174) families signed up for gift cards this year, a 35% increase from last year; \$11,075 in gift cards are being distributed to help families with holiday presents.
  - Club retention is at 100% from last year, with six new clubs added; 14 clubs are active and collaborating on campus and off-campus activities.
  - The Clipper Spirit Store resolution was passed and the store opened this quarter; hoodies are the most popular item so far. There are plans to gather more student feedback for future operations.
  - Student Senate aims to increase awareness of campus resources like the Food Pantry, Clipper Spirit Store, campus café, and free Wi-Fi.
  - Two new Senate members were hired; focus remains on supporting student needs, promoting resources, and growing upcoming projects.
  - Overall, there is gratitude for community support and enthusiasm for continued growth and student engagement.
- Dr. Stokes noted:
  - The faculty union is undergoing a transition in leadership, with the official transition occurring on January 1.
  - Carlea McAvoy, the outgoing faculty union president, served for two years. She introduced the new faculty union president, Jason Salcedo, who has been at the institution for 27 years and previously held other leadership roles.
  - Jason Salcedo acknowledged the complexity of the role and expressed eagerness to work with faculty and administration to advance the college's goals.
  - The Board thanked and acknowledged Carlea McAvoy for her contributions and efforts during her leadership tenure.
- Dr. Stokes reported:
  - The Aspen application was officially submitted at noon on December 9 and is considered strong. A copy will be shared with the board. There is now a waiting period. Key data points are trending upward, especially

transfer success and baccalaureate completion rates, which are significantly higher than before. Overall completion rates have increased, with a notable 18-point jump in first-quarter math completion since implementing Guided Pathways. The application is comprehensive and highlights strategic achievements that are easy to overlook in daily work. He expressed gratitude to Kati Sagawa, Alexis Calma, and the Executive Team for their contributions to the application.

- Registration for winter quarter is about 75% complete; winter quarter starts on January 5. Total enrollment is currently up by about 14% compared to last year at this time; expected to end up between 9-11% higher due to fluctuations. Running Start enrollment continues to be strong and ABE (Adult Basic Education) numbers are also performing well. ESL (English as a Second Language) numbers are down, which was anticipated. Enrollments are still being processed, and the number of new students is lower than returning students, as expected. Retention rates are slightly down, but this was anticipated.
- Four main factors have impacted cash flow recently: State Board switched to a reimbursement model; changes in Running Start tuition payments due to new legislative action; more students are on a payment plan; and the federal government shutdown. Moving forward, the impact should lessen as the college adapts to these new models and timelines. A plan is in place to avoid a similar situation next year. Future planning will involve holding more cash at year-end to better manage transitions and delays in funding.
- The Executive Team discussed three major projects: soccer field, housing, and healthcare program expansion.
  - Soccer field: Bids for the soccer field opened; project proceeds to allow infrastructure work supporting future housing (storm water, electrical, water).
  - Housing project ("go or no-go") will be delayed until after the next budget session (post 2027-29 biennial) due to budget uncertainty and operational concerns. Significant cost of \$650,000 associated with housing (staffing, facilities, grounds, maintenance) are a concern given current tight budgets. Housing project is being "slow rolled," not cancelled—timing and incremental progress will be revisited as budget clarity improves and state/federal funding becomes clearer.
  - Healthcare expansion: Negotiations are ongoing for the healthcare building, with a focus on securing favorable pricing and lease terms. Recent meetings with healthcare partners (e.g., Multicare, Providence) indicate strong demand and willingness to support both clinical placements and possible space needs. New allocation model for funding will be directed toward healthcare expansion,

- aiming to boost enrollment and tuition revenue, rather than covering housing operational costs.
- Updates on timelines and bonding processes for projects will be provided in January/February; flexibility and incremental milestones are being considered.
- The Evergreen State College expressed interest in a joint meeting, initiated by both their president and chair. Meeting timing was discussed; a date before May is not feasible due to tenure commitments. Primary topic suggested for the meeting is the enhanced transfer agreement, to ensure the discussion is focused and productive. Input and feedback from the trustees are requested, and they have time to consider and respond. Overall, there is agreement that focused dialogue is valuable, especially around the transfer agreement.
  - He noted some achievements that are a source of pride and recognition for the college and its staff:
    - An article written by Dr. Ellen Vujasinovic, Director of Student Learning Assessment, Center for Teaching & Online Learning (CTOL) and Dr. Kari Thierer, former CTOL's Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, was published by the Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education. The article highlights the college's assessment process for college-wide learning outcomes, which is a rare recognition for a community college in a professional higher education publication. The college will be the only community college represented at the upcoming national conference.
    - Jennifer Barber, Dean of Transition Studies and Dr. Melissa Meade, Dean of Humanities and Communication, were accepted to present their work with faculty on post-tenure review at the ACC Conference in April.
  - He noted the President's Outreach/Professional Development/Advocacy Activities List in TAB 2.

## POLICY

### Exceptional Faculty Award–Fall Quarter

Dr. Michelle Andreas, Vice President for Instruction, and Sally Sharbaugh, Counselor, who serves on the Exceptional Faculty Awards Committee, presented the Committee's recommendation for Exceptional Faculty Award for Fall Quarter 2025.

Math Professor Jason Barnett and Chemistry Professor Marie Dunn proposed integrating gamification (to include competitive activities to make learning more interactive and enjoyable) into STEM classes to increase student engagement,

especially in online environments. The project will span four quarters: researching, planning, designing, implementing, gathering student feedback, and refining strategies in two courses, with the goal of scaling successful methods to additional faculty through workshops and presentations. The proposal requests funding of just over \$8,700 to support the faculty's time and project activities over the year. This initiative demonstrates faculty innovation and responsiveness to student needs, aiming to enhance learning experiences and outcomes.

### Gamification in STEM – Increasing Engagement Through Proven Practices

Jason Barnett and Marie Dunn; Exceptional Faculty Award Amount: \$8,708.70

"The purpose of the proposed project is to explore and implement gamification techniques to enhance motivation, build community, and improve success in hybrid and online STEM courses at SPSCC. The project activities are planned across four quarters and include research, design, implementation, pilot testing, evaluation, and dissemination.

The goals of this project are to:

- develop and pilot a gamification system for hybrid and online STEM courses;
- identify and apply effective gamification strategies;
- create a sustainable, scalable model that can be easily adapted to other SPSCC courses;
- enhance student belonging and participation;
- and evaluate the system's impact.

Research consistently shows that gamification strategies improve persistence and engagement in STEM courses, especially in online environments where students may feel isolated. Anticipated results of this project include increased student engagement, higher completion and success rates, and reduced equity gaps. This work will establish a foundation for future interdisciplinary projects and provide a model for inclusive, interactive course design that can be shared across departments."

It was moved by Trustee Mah and seconded by Trustee Garman **THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE FOLLOWING PROPOSAL FOR EXCEPTIONAL FACULTY AWARD AS PRESENTED IN TAB 3: \$8,708.70 TO EXPLORE AND IMPLEMENT GAMIFICATION TECHNIQUES TO ENHANCE MOTIVATION, BUILD COMMUNITY, AND IMPROVE SUCCESS IN HYBRID AND ONLINE STEM COURSES AT SPSCC. THE MOTION CARRIES.**

### Contract Renewal/Non-Renewal

The Probationary Review Committees (PRC) for off-cycle, summer-start faculty members, have completed their activities and prepared evaluation and progress reports. Committee reports were reviewed by the Board prior to the December meeting. The Board considered contract renewal or non-renewal for the following:

#### Second Year

- Li Li, Nursing
- Shana Parker, Nursing

It was moved by Trustee Garman and seconded by Trustee Mah **THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, AFTER GIVING REASONABLE CONSIDERATION TO THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE PROBATIONARY REVIEW COMMITTEE AND**

**REVIEWING THE TOTALITY OF INFORMATION, DIRECT THE PRESIDENT TO GIVE NOTIFICATION OF CONTRACT RENEWAL FOR THE 2026-27 ACADEMIC YEAR EFFECTIVE SUMMER QUARTER 2026 TO LI LI, NURSING PROFESSOR. THE MOTION CARRIES.**

It was moved by Trustee Drew and seconded by Trustee Mah **THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, AFTER GIVING REASONABLE CONSIDERATION TO THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE PROBATIONARY REVIEW COMMITTEE AND REVIEWING THE TOTALITY OF INFORMATION, DIRECT THE PRESIDENT TO GIVE NOTIFICATION OF CONTRACT RENEWAL FOR THE 2026-27 ACADEMIC YEAR EFFECTIVE SUMMER QUARTER 2026 TO SHANA PARKER, NURSING PROFESSOR. THE MOTION CARRIES.**

#### First Year

- Debbie Slyter, Nursing

It was moved by Trustee Brown and seconded by Trustee Garman **THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, AFTER GIVING REASONABLE CONSIDERATION TO THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE PROBATIONARY REVIEW COMMITTEE AND REVIEWING THE TOTALITY OF INFORMATION, DIRECT THE PRESIDENT TO GIVE NOTIFICATION OF CONTRACT RENEWAL FOR THE 2026-27 ACADEMIC YEAR EFFECTIVE SUMMER QUARTER 2026 TO DEBBIE SLYTER, NURSING PROFESSOR. THE MOTION CARRIES.**

**BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS** No Report.

### **BUDGET AND FINANCE**

#### Quarterly Financial Report

Dr. Tolefree, Vice President for Finance and Operations and Parminder Kaur, Associate Vice President of Finance, reported on the financial operation of the first quarter of the 2025-26 fiscal year.

#### Operating revenues

Total operating revenues for FY26 Q1 increased by 1.2% to \$35.1M compared to FY25 Q1 of \$34.7M.

- \$693K increase in total tuition operating fees
- \$124K increase in state allocation
- \$333K decrease in CCE transfers
- \$123K negative variance in matriculation fees, rent, and interest

#### Operating expenses

The operating expenses for FY26 Q1 totaled \$11.8M, a 14.8% increase compared to

FY25 Q1 of \$10.2M. The rise primarily results from increased salaries, wages, and employee benefits of \$958K (COLA funded at only 79%, placing more burden on the college); increase in equipment expenses of \$211K; and a slight increase in goods and services of \$75K as compared to FY25. The operating surplus for FY26 Q1 amounts to \$23.3M, \$1.1M lower than in FY25 Q1, which was \$24.4M.

Total FY26 Q1 non-operating revenues: \$4.8M, offset by expenses totaling \$3.3M, resulting in a net gain of \$1.5M. Key revenue contributors:

- CCE: \$390K
- E-learning: \$290K
- Technology fees: \$247K
- Lab and supply fees: \$195K
- Student services: \$187K

Overall, the college's non-operating accounts maintained a stable financial position for the quarter.

Their summary is that the FY26 Q1 results demonstrate satisfactory performance in total operating revenues, driven by increased tuition operating fees. Due to the current state of external factors related to federal and state funding and budgetary constraints, they will continue to review and monitor enrollments, associated revenues, and overall expenses, and adjust as needed.

## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

### **Activities Update**

Amanda Ybarra, Executive Diversity Officer, provided an update on activities and current efforts:

- Ongoing national conversation about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) work at colleges has led to increased scrutiny and requests for compliance assurances. Signing federal assurances has become potentially risky for college administrators.
- Changes in federal guidance related to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act has changed in 2025 and have made certain race-conscious programs, scholarships, and identity-based events (e.g., cultural centers, specific graduation ceremonies) illegal in some states.
- Many community colleges are updating DEI language and structures due to legal changes, and SPSCC is proactively responding to recent federal guidance. Maintaining compliance is crucial for continued federal funding and institutional support. Our goal is to ensure support and inclusivity for all students while adhering to evolving legal requirements.
- An environmental scan was conducted to assess how the college presents its inclusion and belonging work. The college has proactively reviewed and adjusted programs and events to remain compliant (e.g., making cultural celebrations



- more inclusive).
- The college has proposed changes to our current DEI titles and student center for clarity and compliance. Recommendation: Rename programs and centers to focus on "Culture and Belonging" for clarity, compliance, and inclusivity. New proposed titles: Executive of Culture and Belonging, Office of Culture and Belonging, and A. Barbara Clarkson Center for Culture and Belonging—aligning with current institutional values and broader trends.
  - Feedback from campus stakeholders (faculty, staff, students) was overwhelmingly supportive of the proposed changes. Staff and community have shown resilience and creativity in continuing equity work, despite external challenges.
  - Transition to new naming and structures will take place in spring and summer, coinciding with accreditation.

There was acknowledgement of this very challenging moment and efforts being made to ensure compliance with regulations while continuing important work. Despite the difficulties, there is encouragement in how individuals and institutions are navigating sensitive conversations related to equity and inclusion, responding, and aiming to protect core values and integrity. Creativity, community-building, and new partnerships are highlighted as opportunities for growth and connection and essential ways to overcome adversity.

Board Chair Hartmann will nominate two trustees to review board policies to ensure the board is working in concert with the college.

After all the inclusion and belonging work is completed, it will be shared with the campus, with transitioning work through spring and summer.

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

- Chair Hartmann passed around a letter from former trustee, Leonor Fuller. Leonor Fuller, the Vice Chair of the Board of Regents at the University of Washington, thanked Dr. Stokes and the Board for hosting the event at SPSCC, introducing the new UW president, Dr. Robert J. Jones, to lawmakers, higher education leaders and community advocates.
- The Board wished everyone happy holidays.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** None.

**ACTION ITEM FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION** None.

**ADJOURNMENT** 3:57 P.M.

  
JUDY HARTMANN, BOARD CHAIR  
SOUTH PUGET SOUND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

  
TIMOTHY STOKES, SECRETARY  
SOUTH PUGET SOUND COMMUNITY COLLEGE