

**South Puget Sound Community College  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
REGULAR MEETING: STUDY SESSION  
Tuesday, February 3, 2026  
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 1:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Trustee Judy Hartmann, Trustee Steven Drew, Trustee Rozanne Garman, and Trustee Mark Brown were present. Trustee Doug Mah was absent. Sharon English, Assistant Attorney General in the Education Division, was present on behalf of Justin Kjolseth, AAG.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 1:00 p.m. Board Chair Hartmann announced that the Board was going into Executive Session until approximately 2:20 p.m. to review the performance of public employees ((RCW 42.30.110(1)(g))), and to discuss with legal counsel any potential litigation, and no action would be taken by the Board during the Executive Session.

**BREAK** 2:24-2:30 p.m.

**RECONVENE REGULAR MEETING**

The regular meeting reconvened at 2:35 p.m. The Board was in Executive Session and there was no action taken by the Board.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

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

**A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

- January 13, 2026 regular board meeting

**B. MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES**

- ACCT National Legislative Summit, February 8-11, 2026, Washington, DC
- ACT Trustee Tuesday, March 10, 2026, Virtual

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

Regular Meeting  
March 10, 2026  
2:30-4:30 p.m.  
South Puget Sound Community College  
2011 Mottman Road, S.W.  
Olympia, WA 98512-6292

## **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 Drew:
    - There was no report, but he noted that trustees have advocated for the Capital funding project for inclusion in the House and Senate budgets and corresponded regarding system-wide funding.
- Board Finance Committee: Trustee Steven Drew--primary; Trustee Mark Brown--secondary
  - Trustee Brown reported:
    - His attendance at the Board Finance Committee meeting, which focused on recommendations regarding mandatory fees and athletic waiver. They discussed proposals to increase certain mandatory fees and to reduce athletic waiver by 25%. The estimated fiscal impact of these changes is approximately \$180,000 per year. A full report and recommendations will be presented later in the agenda.
- Foundation Board: Trustee Rozanne Garman--primary; Trustee Judy Hartman--secondary
  - Trustee Garman reported:
    - Foundation retreat was held on January 26, providing opportunities for board members to connect and review the strategic plan established in 2024.
    - Foundation is cultivating and deepening donor relationships using various methods.
    - In recent years, the Foundation Board ensured every scholarship request was funded, using unrestricted funds to cover gaps at the end of the cycle. Budget for scholarships and grants was increased this year, aligning with enrollment trends and allowing flexibility to meet varying demand.

- There were recent tours of the college's Architecture & Engineering (AEC), Machining, Welding, and Automotive programs to better understand their offerings and facilities. There are discussions on exploring revenue-generation opportunities such as curated events to highlight these programs, leveraging construction, welding, and automotive spaces for activities or business ventures outside standard class times, creating a new construction cohort similar to the Entrepreneurs Academy model, or utilizing shop spaces for external projects.
- She noted the Machining program recently acquired a \$150,000 piece of equipment via grant funding. While interest in the Machining program is high, there is a need to strengthen industry connections, particularly in Thurston County. She noted welding technology professor Evan Duncan who earned a national certification to perform industry-standard inspections. This enables him to certify student and local projects.

## REPORT FROM THE COLLEGE PRESIDENT

- There were no reports from Student Senate, Faculty Union, and Faculty Senate as it was a Study Session board meeting.
- Dr. Stokes reported:
  - Enrollment is up about 5%, which is positive, but budget concerns remain significant. Despite increased enrollment, state tuition revenue is not keeping pace with expenses, leading to a budget crisis.
  - The executive team is preparing budget reduction proposals, with notifications affecting instructional programs and personnel continuing through March. Discussions about budget decisions will take place in March.
  - The college will open a Voluntary Employee Separation Incentive program (VESI) for classified employees, but not all applicants will be approved and vacated positions cannot be refilled.
  - An upcoming college forum will review the financial situation, driven by rising personnel and benefit costs, inflation, equipment/software expenses, and unfunded COLAs from the legislature.
  - There is concern over an "enrollment cliff" and potential reductions in Running Start (RS) enrollment, which is a major revenue source.
  - The 1.5% of the governor's budget reduction proposal could become 2-3% in the actual budget. RS enrollment caps will be dropping from 1.4 to 1.2 across the system, causing an \$18M impact.
  - Legislation to decrease tuition by 10% annually over three years is not progressing, but the RS cap reduction is moving forward.
  - Advocacy, outreach, and ongoing efforts are underway to navigate the financial challenges; the situation is affecting colleges statewide.
  - The board acknowledged college leadership and staff for their hard work, transparency, and resilience during these challenging times.
  - He noted the President's Outreach/Professional Development/Advocacy Activities List in TAB 2.

**INFORMATIVE REPORT** No Report.**POLICY**

## Fees and Waiver

Parminder Kaur, Associate Vice President of Finance, Sophia Santos, Student Account Manager, and Dr. Dave Pelkey, Vice President for Student Services, presented the administration's recommendation for Board approval to increase select mandatory fees and a reduction of the athletic waiver by 25%. Fee increases are intended to support academic quality, expand student services, and align with strategic priorities.

## Proposed Athletic Waiver

In October of 2024, the Board of Trustees approved a request to increase the Athletic Waiver from 25% to 100% for 15-credit resident operating fees for grant-in-aid eligible student-athletes. The proposal now is to decrease the waiver by 25% for FY27, which equates to \$57,900, and to re-allocate those resources to higher-impact areas such as maintaining the soccer field, offsetting the COP, or other priorities of the athletic department, without diminishing commitment to athletes.

## Proposed Mandatory Fees

The mandatory fee increases proposed for various programs include:

- Running Start Associated Program fee to increase from \$5 to \$10 per credit, capped at 10 credits (\$100 maximum).
- Online class fee will remain \$8 per credit, but capped at 15 credits (\$120 max).
- A new comprehensive fee of \$35 will replace multiple separate fees and will be eligible for financial aid.
- A new one-time application fee of \$10 introduced to offset administrative costs and discourage fraudulent applications, which have risen nationally.
- Non-mandatory state employee tuition fee to increase from \$5 flat fee to \$10 per credit.

Fee changes aim to improve technology, compliance, and transparency for students, with comprehensive fee simplifying financial aid eligibility. The average student will see an increase of about \$65 per term; some fee waivers remain for eligible students.

There was discussion on a trustee's proposed amendment to the recommendation that would include implementing an automatic annual fee adjustment tied to inflation or tuition inflator or CPI (Consumer Price Index) to avoid recurring manual updates. The administration will do some work on this and come back with a proposal at the next meeting.

It was moved by Trustee Garman and seconded by Trustee Drew **THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE PROPOSED MANDATORY FEE INCREASES/ ADJUSTMENTS AND A 25% DECREASE IN THE ATHLETIC WAIVER PERCENTAGE FOR 15-CREDIT RESIDENT OPERATING FEES FOR GRANT-IN-AID**

**ELIGIBLE STUDENT-ATHLETES IN TAB 3, AS AMENDED. THE MOTION CARRIES.****BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS** No Report.**BUDGET AND FINANCE** No Report.**DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION** No Report.**STUDY SESSION**

## Core Theme 1: Student Achievement

Dr. Michelle Andreas, Vice President for Instruction; Jennifer Tuia, Director of Institutional Research; and Dr. Pelkey, provided an update on Core Theme 1--annual update on college performance, student achievement, and ongoing strategic initiatives. The college is still awaiting student achievement data from the State Board, leaving gaps in the current year's performance metrics. Once received, the data will be updated and distributed electronically.

Three-year averages are used to set baselines and targets, removing outlier years for more accurate trend assessment.

Academic Performance Trends: Overall, the scorecard reflects steady improvements across most measures. College-level math completion within the first year reached a record 49.0%, up from 32.3% baseline and up 7% from 2024-25. Student persistence rates rose to 81.6%, with 2024-25 at 82.9%, indicating hundreds more students continue their studies year-to-year.

- **Goal 1: Increase Student Persistence**
  - Transition from basic skills to pre-college or college-level math
    - Baseline 3-year average: 22.7%; 2024-25=18.9%; 2025-26 waiting for data; 5% mission fulfillment=23.8%
  - Transition from 0 to 15+ college-level credits within the year:
    - Baseline 3-year average: 30.1%; 2024-25=29.3%; 2025-26 waiting for data; 5% mission fulfillment=31.6%
  - Transition from 30 to 45 college-level credits within the year
    - Baseline 3-year average: 45.4%; 2024-25=51.0%; 2025-26 waiting for data; 5% mission fulfillment=47.7%
  - Completion of college-level math within the first academic year
    - Baseline 3-year average: 32.3%; 2024-25=42.0%; 2025-26=49.0%; 5% mission fulfillment=34.0%
  - Continuous enrollment during the first academic year
    - Baseline 3-year average: 79.5%; 2024-25=82.9%; 2025-26=81.6%; 5% mission fulfillment=83.5%
- **Goal 2: Increase Certificate and Degree Completion**
  - Graduation with a degree or certificate within 3 years

- Baseline 3-year average: 37.6%; 2024-25=38.4%; 2025-26=41.4%; 5% mission fulfillment=39.5%
- **Goal 3: Increase Job Placement for Workforce Education Students**
  - Workforce students employed within 12 months after completion/graduation
    - Baseline 3-year average: 73.3%; 2024-25=72.1%; 2025-26=74.5%; 5% mission fulfillment=77.0%

Focus on Post-Completion Success: There is increased focus on tracking baccalaureate completion, transfer rates, and long-term workforce outcomes. The need to monitor progress for historically underrepresented, Pell-eligible, and part-time students was discussed, to track their individual trajectories and close achievement gaps.

Peer and Aspirational Comparisons: The Institutional Effectiveness Committee selected nationwide peer institutions for benchmarking, based on similar demographics and programs. West Valley College (CA) was chosen as an aspirational benchmark, though differences in context and workforce programs exist. Three-year graduation rates remain mostly flat, attributed to pandemic disruptions and demographic differences compared to aspirational peers.

Community and Career Engagement: Enhanced collaboration with local chambers of commerce and industry partners to support career fairs and job placement. Improvements in communication about financial aid and registration processes, leveraging new technology for enhanced support.

#### Project Updates:

- Refining rubrics for our new College-Wide Abilities
- Expanding training for adjunct faculty through new orientations, workshops, paid in-service attendance, and expanding the number of adjuncts who attend the adjunct core teaching and learning series
- Broadening our strategy for creating bachelor degrees (business, education, nursing)
- Making plans to expand healthcare
- Implementing strategies for strengthening employment and transfer outcomes for students (Unlocking Opportunity)
- Implementing significant updates to Navigate advising software, to increase mobile connection and add supports for students
- Refining the early-alert and raise-your-hand system to provide more awareness and just-in-time support for students
- Significantly expanding our transfer connections and transfer support for students
- Expanding our Career Connections, Career Fair and Job placement support
- Increasing collaboration, communication and support for students using financial aid

## CCS 103: Transfer Preparation

Amy Tureen, Dean of Academic Success Programs and Dr. Val Robertson, Dean of Enrollment Services, presented on CCS 103 and transfer services and support to ensure students are well-prepared and supported throughout their transfer journey. They discussed ongoing efforts to improve student transfer experiences at the college, building on recent external research and campus feedback.

**Student Feedback & Main Challenges:** Students felt unprepared for transfer and lacked sufficient information despite some advising and resources. Many experienced isolation and lack of connection upon arriving at universities, struggling with new systems and missing familiar faces. Financial aid and scholarship navigation was confusing for transferring students. Students desired more opportunities to connect with peers going to the same universities.

**Academic Program Restructuring:** Starting 2027/28 academic year, the college plans to restructure transfer preparation courses, notably CCS 101 (required) and CCS 103 (currently optional), expanding them to five credits and creating tailored tracks for transfer and workforce students. New versions will provide more comprehensive, relevant content and be offered both online and in-person.

**Student Services interventions and strategies:** advising, program selection, and transfer planning. Students are assigned specialized transfer advisors early in their academic journey. Transfer preparation courses are being updated to include information literacy skills and general wellness strategies.

**Technology:** Academic technology tools based on degree pathway (academic planning software, new transfer website, Advising Canvass, information repository coming soon).

**Transfer:** Increased number of transfer workshops, application sessions, meetings with transfer and university admissions counselors, and classroom presentations and workshops.

**Building University Connections:** The college has signed articulation agreements with several universities (UW Tacoma, Washington State University Vancouver, The Evergreen State College, St. Martin's University), some of which have a physical advising presence on campus. There are continuing efforts to create more welcoming, supportive transitions for transferring students. Initiatives like campus tours, joint events, and transfer socials are popular and growing. Tabling and workshops have increased, offering more opportunities for student engagement with university advisors.

**Peer Connections at SPSCC:** Campus tours and transfer social activities give students chances to meet and connect with peers headed to the same universities. There are collaborations with Student Life and Instruction to foster student relationships and networking.

**Financial Planning Support:** Implementation of new financial planner tools and targeted financial aid workshops focused on transfer-related costs and scholarships. Education

planning emphasizes financial efficiency and scholarship opportunities at the university level.

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

Trustee Brown expressed appreciation for the recent campus equity event, highlighting its uplifting atmosphere, the shared sense of community and the shared values among participants. He described the keynote as both informative and inspirational, sharing personal stories and broader lessons. The day's theme, as set by Amanda Ybarra in her opening slides, was "equity is at the core of who we are as an institution," which shaped the spirit of the entire event. He commended Amanda Ybarra, Joe Aguilar, the equity committee, and all volunteers for their excellent work. He concluded with thanks for the successful event.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** None.

**ACTION ITEM FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION** None.

**ADJOURNMENT** 4:25 P.M.

  
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JUDY HARTMANN, BOARD CHAIR  
SOUTH PUGET SOUND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

  
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TIMOTHY STOKES, SECRETARY  
SOUTH PUGET SOUND COMMUNITY COLLEGE