

**South Puget Sound Community College
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING: STUDY SESSION
Tuesday, April 14, 2026
Building 22-Room 195
2011 Mottman Road, S.W.
Olympia, WA 98512-6292**

CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair Judy Hartmann called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 2:00 p.m. Board Chair Hartmann announced that the Board was going into Executive Session until approximately 2:30 p.m. to discuss with legal counsel litigation or potential litigation, and no action would be taken by the Board during the Executive Session.

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.

Board Chair Hartmann noted that the standard item, "**COMMENTS FROM INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**" would be added at the end of today's agenda.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

It was moved by Trustee Drew and seconded by Trustee Mah, **THAT THE CONSENT AGENDA WITH THE AMENDMENT NOTED ABOVE, BE APPROVED. THE MOTION CARRIES.**

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- March 10, 2026 regular board meeting

B. MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

- ACT Trustee Tuesday, April 14, 2026, Virtual
- ACT Spring Conference, May 7-8, 2026, Blaine

C. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Faculty Tenure Reception, April 14, 2026, 4:45, 1st Floor-Building 25

D. DATE OF THE NEXT BOARD MEETING

Regular Meeting

May 12, 2026

2:30-4:30 p.m.

South Puget Sound Community College

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PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Hartmann opened the *Public Comments* and noted that each board meeting includes a public-comment period guided by board policy. She reviewed the process and ground rules, “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.” Chair Hartmann also noted the college is facing difficult decisions and that the Board shares the community’s concern. They will listen respectfully to public comments and accept questions, but will not answer them during this session; instead, concerns will inform later deliberations. The speakers will be called from the sign-up sheet.

- Comment #1: certified executive chef and certified pastry chef
- Comment #2: high school college and career readiness counselor
- Comment #3: high school food science teacher
- Comment #4: community patron
- Comment #5: New Market Skills Center culinary instructor
- Comment #6: former culinary student
- Comment #7: culinary program alumna

The following are main themes across the comments on the discontinuation of the Culinary Program and Baking & Pastry Arts Program provided by seven individuals:

- Urges the Board to keep the Culinary Arts and Baking & Pastry programs, framing closure as a long-term community loss
- Ongoing demand for trained cooks/bakers; programs as a direct feeder into local restaurants, bakeries, campus dining, and internships
- Emphasis that with real kitchen experience, professionalism, and job-readiness—graduates can contribute on day one and advance faster than peers without formal training
- Beyond cooking, highlights teamwork, time management, accountability, performing under pressure, budgeting, meal planning, nutrition, leadership, hospitality, and entrepreneurship
- Impact for nontraditional, at-risk, and underrepresented students—building confidence, purpose, mentorship, and a pathway for those who may not pursue a four-year degree
- Credential and structured training as a route from entry-level roles to leadership/management, higher wages, and even business ownership

- Connect program survival to the health of the local food economy—supporting small businesses, maintaining service quality/food safety, and avoiding future workforce shortages
- One comment that culinary creativity and soft skills are enduring and not readily automated

BOARD SPECIAL COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS

- ACT Legislative Action Committee (LAC): Trustee Doug Mah--primary; Trustee Steven Drew--secondary
 - Trustee Mah:
 - There was nothing to report. The last meeting of the Legislative Action Committee was canceled.
 - Trustee Drew:
 - Significant turnover occurred late in the session on higher-education committees in both the House and Senate.
 - Stakeholders should closely monitor these vacancies and actively advocate for replacements who will be more responsive.
- Board Finance Committee: Trustee Steven Drew--primary; Trustee Mark Brown--secondary
 - Trustee Drew reported:
 - There was no report. The next meeting of the Board Finance Committee will be on April 24.
- Foundation Board: Trustee Rozanne Garman--primary; Trustee Judy Hartman--secondary
 - Trustee Garman reported:
 - She had no report as she was unable to attend the last meeting. Kelly Green, Vice President for Advancement, provided the following report:
 - The Foundation Board had a long meeting focused on budget pressures and how shifts in community/business giving are affecting the Foundation.
 - Businesses are cutting back, especially on unrestricted gifts, prompting discussion of budget reductions. The Foundation expects to make adjustments due to continued declines in unrestricted giving, despite increases in scholarships and some endowments.
 - Major near-term focus is the Clipper Scramble golf tournament (June 5) to fundraise and spotlight the men's and women's golf teams.
 - Sponsorships are going well—around 80% of the sponsorship goal—with visibility-based sponsorships still attractive in the current giving climate.
- Ad-Hoc Governance Committee--Policies Review: Trustee Judy Hartmann--member; Trustee Doug Mah--member
 - Trustee Hartmann reported:
 - The committee met and completed a full review of board policies. The periodic review is to keep policies current with state law,

regulations, and accreditation requirements, and the changes were shared with the AAG for confirmation/consistency. Recommended changes were sent to Diana to compile into a revised document for the full board's review. Trustees are asked to review and provide feedback before the May meeting so the board can take action in May.

REPORT FROM THE COLLEGE PRESIDENT

- Dr. Stokes reported:
 - There were no reports from Student Senate, Faculty Union, and Faculty Senate as it was a Study Session board meeting.
 - Recognition: The college was named a Military Friendly School in the small community college category—ranked #3 overall and ranked #5 Military Spouse Friendly School.
 - Major credit to the Valor Center; veteran enrollment has grown from ~200 to ~500. Veterans access financial aid through the Washington College Grant, Pell Grant, GI Bill, and additional aid resources, supporting access and enrollment.
 - Enrollment is up ~3% in spring vs. last year, but below the ~8% gains seen in fall/winter. Signs of enrollment softening in second language acquisition and Adult Basic Education; and international participation down due to visa difficulty.
 - Budget recommendations (including international-related items) to be presented for first reading in May.
 - He noted the President's Outreach/Professional Development/Advocacy Activities List in TAB 2.

INFORMATIVE REPORT No Report.

POLICY No Report.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS No Report.

BUDGET AND FINANCE No Report.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION No Report.

STUDY SESSION

Core Theme 2: Equity

Jennifer Manley, Dean of Student Engagement & Retention; Jennifer Tuia, Director of Institutional Research; and Joe Aguilar, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, provided an update on Core Theme 2.

Core Theme 2 metrics use a rolling 3-year average to smooth fluctuations (but it also carries forward impacts from COVID, ctcLink launch, and external/political factors).

Equity Scorecard: retention (Achievement Gaps)

- Full-time vs. part-time students (fall-to-fall retention gap): 18.4 (2024–25); 20.1 (2025–26)
- Historically Underrepresented vs. Asian/Caucasian students (fall-to-fall retention gap): 8.6 (2024–25); 8.1 (2025–26)
- Need-based financial aid recipients vs. non-recipients (fall-to-fall retention gap): 5.1 (2024–25); 8.1 (2025–26)

Achievement Gap: fall to fall retention, full-time and part-time students

- Full-time retention: Generally stable to improving over time; Fall 2024 ~71%, up by ~1.2% from Fall 2023
- Part-time retention is more volatile and lower; Fall 2024 ~50.9%, down ~.5% from Fall 2023

Retention Rate: national peer comparison

- Full-time retention: 2020 = 64%; 2023 = 59%; Part-time retention: 2020 = 41%; 2023 = 47%
- Compared to similar peer colleges and an aspirational peer (West Valley College) noted for strong retention; SPSCC is adopting strategies like cohort supports and early alerts.

Historically Underrepresented students

- 2024 retention for major groups (e.g., African American, Hispanic, Multiracial) is higher than the prior five years; Asian retention dipped and staff will investigate why (possible transfers).

Need-based aid students

- Retention for students receiving aid is trending upward; however, the reported gap widened in part because the rolling average dropped an earlier year when aid recipients retained at higher rates.
- The drop around Fall 2022 may be linked to ctcLink/financial-aid coding changes and/or FAFSA timing changes.

Completion (3-year completion for full-time, degree-seeking fall entrants)

- Part-time completion is the highest in approximately seven years, rising to nearly 20% (up from about 15–16% historically).
- Completion gaps show mixed movement; the Fall 2022 cohort appears to be a low point, aligning with the retention dip.

Workforce diversity

- Employees of color represent about ~1/3 of staff overall; ~1/5 of full-time faculty.
- Diversity goals are driven primarily by accreditation expectations and alignment with community and student demographics.

IGNITE program:

- Expanded access in 2023–24; the program continues to primarily serve low-income, first-generation, and historically underrepresented students.
- 94% first-quarter retention and 64% first-year retention—higher than similarly eligible non-IGNITE students (Board requested persistence broken out by demographics).
- Enrollment is increasing quickly (about 298 reported a few weeks ago; now ~315+ following continued orientations).
- Growth is attributed to an intentionally built culture of joy, love, safety, and community and central to student engagement and persistence.
- Staff use Navigate360 to send targeted texts/emails clearly labeled as IGNITE; only ~6 of ~300 students did not re-enroll for spring, mostly due to transfer/graduation/completion rather than disengagement.
- Students cluster in transfer pathways (notably pre-nursing/biology) and professional/technical programs (nursing, cybersecurity, automotive, business). Work is underway to build clearer pathways from transition studies, high school completion, and ESL into IGNITE.
- Testimonials describe IGNITE as a rare safe space, supporting students who previously stopped out and helping some grow into leadership roles such as peer mentors.
- Holistic, data-informed supports (quarterly surveys), expanded tutoring, and partnerships that bring services into the center (e.g., workforce training presence and set-day financial aid advising).
- Active participation in broader events (equity symposium, community summits, conference watch parties) to strengthen community and support underserved groups.
- Next steps: Formalize IGNITE as a structured developmental pathway (academic, life, and career skills) and expand access for part-time/online students via hybrid livestreamed workshops with recordings.
- International students are not currently eligible; staff are exploring whether/how to change this. A potential program/center renaming is also under discussion (ideally timed for summer to minimize disruption).

Core Theme 3: Learning & Engagement

Victoria Hill, Dean of Student Financial Services, Dr. Valerie Robertson, Dean of Enrollment Services, Jennifer Manley; and Jennifer Tuia, provided an update on Core Theme 3.

- Core Theme 3 includes three measures and is currently at 100%; a prior dip in student services has been addressed.
- Faculty assess five College-Wide Abilities (Analytical Reasoning, Effective Communication, Information Literacy, Multicultural Awareness, Social Responsibility) using embedded assignments and Canvas data; ~9 in 10 students meet expectations, with analytical reasoning lowest (~92%). (A chart error was noted and an updated graphic was provided).
- Student life/engagement: About 4 in 5 participants report events are valuable, but survey response counts have declined. There was a suggestion to use QR codes to increase responses.

- Graduating-student services survey: Now embedded in the graduation process, yielding high response volume; all service areas improved modestly year over year and no longer show a “red” concern area.
- Service improvement focus: Clear, timely communication and broader student engagement across student services.
- Technology enablement: Expanded use of EAB/Navigate for outreach, case management, early alerts, coordinated messaging, and reporting, including AI-enabled tools (student-facing chatbot/knowledge agent, staff message/template generation, and reporting support).
- Process improvement: Better data-sharing/auto-population across onboarding and financial aid to reduce re-entry, while protecting FAFSA data access.
- A Welcome Center provides one-stop enrollment support; hybrid/recorded workshops are being used to better reach part-time and online students.

COMMENTS FROM INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Board Chair Hartmann:
 - The Board’s Resolution passed in March was delivered to former trustee Jeff Davis. He appreciated the Resolution and sends greetings to the board.
 - Between now and the next board meeting, trustees will receive the president’s evaluation materials, which they will have to review before the May meeting. Chair Hartmann noted that they should be prepared to discuss them in May executive session.
 - Presidential evaluation assessments are due on May 18.
 - The June 9 Board meeting will start at 11:00 a.m. with an executive session and the regular meeting will end at 3:00 p.m.
- Trustee Drew:
 - Requested non-urgent data to help make a compelling, localized case to local legislators about the college’s structural budget problem: include top 3-4 cost/revenue drivers and each driver’s individual + aggregate dollar impact over FY 2022–FY 2025, especially where revenue has not increased to keep pace (examples mentioned: salaries/benefits, overhead/energy/inflation, reduced contract revenue, international student declines).
- Trustee Brown:
 - He attended the ACCT New Trustee Training. He praised the presenter Dr. Mary Spilde and noted a key takeaway: “the board is most effective when it speaks with one voice.” He also attended the ACCT Regional Zoom meeting attended by about 50–60 trustees across the Pacific region.
 - April is National Community College Month; other states leverage it with proclamations, open houses, and leadership visibility. He suggested that SPSCC consider similar advocacy next year (during legislative session).
 - ACCT participation deadlines shared: November 1 deadline to join ACCT committees; June 22 deadline for outstanding faculty member award nomination deadline.

- Trustee Garman:
 - She has been working with Noel Rubadue and Omey Nandyal to explore new program collaborations, with momentum building around a machining + welding initiative modeled after the auto shop public/community service approach.
 - The idea is to open small, paid welding repair project services to the public (e.g., trailer/boat hitch work, small frame repairs, small ladders), giving students real projects while creating a revenue opportunity for the programs.
 - Next steps include:
 - Confirm scope of allowable projects (types/size), pricing, and safety/liability requirements.
 - Identify a target launch quarter (fall vs. winter)
 - Draft a pilot plan (capacity, staffing, hours, intake process)
 - Coordinate a community-facing announcement/intake process so the public can submit small projects once dates are set.

EXECUTIVE SESSION None.

ACTION ITEM FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION None.

ADJOURNMENT 4:27 P.M.

Following the Board meeting was the Faculty Tenure Reception in Building 25.



JUDY HARTMANN, BOARD CHAIR
SOUTH PUGET SOUND COMMUNITY COLLEGE



TIMOTHY STOKES, SECRETARY
SOUTH PUGET SOUND COMMUNITY COLLEGE