

South Puget Sound Community College
Special Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, July 14, 2026
Center for Student Success,
Building 22-Room 195
South Puget Sound Community College
2011 Mottman Road, S.W.
Olympia, WA 98512-6292

SPECIAL MEETING

Under RCW 42.30.080, a special meeting of the Board of Trustees, District 24, South Puget Sound Community College, was held on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. in the Center for Student Success, Building 22-Room 195, 2011 Mottman Road SW, Olympia, WA 98512. The Board of Trustees had a retreat for their special meeting.

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

Board Chair Hartmann noted that the year ahead is expected to be especially busy, with several major priorities and events, some overlapping:

- NWCCU Accreditation site-visit
- Nursing Accreditation site-visit
- Aspen site-visit
- Long legislative session
- Financial issues and budget development will require attention at the federal, state, and institutional levels.
- A large group of faculty members are completing the tenure process, which involves significant faculty and staff participation.
- The college will continue developing new strategic plan goals and related measures.
- Ongoing priorities include expanding medical field programs, advancing “Unlocking Opportunity” and livable wage work, and supporting campus and community needs.

She reminded the group to keep students, faculty, staff, the community, and broader political dynamics in mind, as the work moves forward. Capacity will be a major concern, including staff capacity and financial capacity. She emphasized the importance of seeing the big picture and understanding how each area of work connects.

Healthcare Expansion

Dr. Michelle Andreas, Vice President for Instruction and Marriya Wright, Dean of Healthcare Professions, presented on the healthcare expansion.

Healthcare remains one of the largest and fastest-growing employment sectors locally and statewide. Their discussion continued on our healthcare programs, their role in meeting regional workforce needs, enrollment trends, program capacity constraints, student success, and opportunities for expansion.

Our healthcare profession programs include:

- Dental Assisting (DA) – Associate in Applied Science
 - Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary (EFDA) – Certification
- Medical Assisting (MA) – Associate in Applied Science & Certification
- Medical Coding & Billing (MEDC) – Certification x2
- Nursing
 - Associate in Nursing DTA/MRP
 - Pre-Nursing – Associate in Pre-Nursing DTA/MRP
 - Certified Nurse Assistant (NAC) – Certification

The college is transitioning away from the stand-alone pre-nursing pathway toward a broader Healthcare Pathway, allowing students to explore multiple health careers. Although healthcare is growing fast, there are several challenges that limit growth: limited physical space, clinical placement shortages, accreditation requirements, faculty shortages, financial barriers for students, and regulatory requirements from the Washington Board of Nursing (WABON). They noted that recent legislative and regulatory changes will help reduce some of these barriers.

The Dental Assisting Program experienced a significant enrollment decline during COVID but is steadily recovering, increasing from 15 students in 2024–25 to 21 in 2025–26, with 26 students projected this year. Future growth is constrained by maximum program capacity, accreditation-required student-to-chair ratios, and the need for additional instructional and dental clinic space to accommodate more students.

Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary (EFDA) is an advanced credential for experienced dental assistants that can significantly increase earning potential—from approximately \$23–26/hour as a dental assistant to \$30–34+/hour as an EFDA. Program growth and success have been demonstrated through expansion from one admission cycle annually to two, implementation of weekend cohorts to increase capacity, and the maintenance of strong waitlists, reflecting sustained student demand.

The Dental Clinic on campus serves both students and community members, provides affordable dental care, primarily serves underserved populations including seniors. There are only four treatment chairs, and space limits community service and student

training opportunities. The recent improvements include new clinic leadership, increased clinic hours, and patient volume growing significantly.

Medical Assisting Program is growing again after COVID. Enrollment: 21 students last year and 32 students projected this fall. Additional growth opportunities exist through the reintroduction of evening/weekend cohorts.

Medical Coding & Billing students can earn separate Coding and Billing certifications. Many complete the Coding credential, gain employment quickly, and do not return for the Billing credential, which can make completion rates appear lower than actual program success. Students also face significant upfront costs, including approximately \$500 for certification exams and \$400 for required books. Despite some concerns, demand remains strong, coding accuracy remains essential, and healthcare organizations continue to hire certified professionals. The college's recent designation as a testing site helps students by eliminating many travel and lodging expenses associated with certification exams.

The Nursing Assistant (NAC) Program enrolls approximately 50 students annually, but faces significant challenges in recruiting qualified instructors due to stringent requirements for long-term care experience and specific professional credentials. These limitations greatly reduce the available faculty pool. While many students obtain NAC certification primarily to strengthen nursing school applications, the community continues to experience a shortage of nursing assistants.

Nursing remains one of the region's most in-demand healthcare professions. Admissions are highly competitive, with 400–600 local pre-nursing students competing for only 124 nursing program seats. Similar capacity challenges exist statewide.

The program faces:

- A significant gap between student demand and available seats.
- Limited clinical placement opportunities.
- Difficulties recruiting and retaining nursing faculty.
- Financial constraints, as enrollment and revenue must support additional faculty and program costs.

Despite these challenges, the college reports:

- Strong applicant quality for faculty positions.
- A positive institutional reputation.
- Effective faculty support and onboarding.
- 93.55% nursing licensure pass rate, exceeding the national average of 86.1%.

Current strategies:

- Expand pre-nursing transfer pathways and create alternative healthcare career options ("Plan B") for students not admitted to nursing programs.
- Advocate with WABON and state legislators on nursing education capacity and regulatory issues.

- Gradually increase nursing program capacity while maintaining financial sustainability.

Washington is developing alternative healthcare education pathways and new transfer agreements. Two statewide Major Related Program–Direct Transfer Agreements (MRP-DTA) are expected to be implemented around 2027, improving transitions into related healthcare careers.

Expansion Plan:

- 1-3 years: Healthcare Transfer Opportunities; MA Expansion; DA/EFDA Expansion; Nursing Expansion: EW Expansion, LPN to RN, RN to BSN, Part-time RN
- 3-5 years: Nursing continuation, Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) – Associate Degree
- 5+ years: Imaging Services, Dental Hygiene, Surgical Technician, Respiratory Therapy, Clinical Laboratory Technology, Occupational Therapy Assistant – Associate Degree

Program expansion is intended to secure new funding sources, not reallocate resources from existing programs. SPSCC has historically been successful in obtaining targeted funding for high-demand workforce programs. Potential funding sources include legislative appropriations, workforce grants, and other high-demand program funding opportunities.

Strategic Plan/Operational Plan Timeline

Dr. Michelle Andreas reviewed the timeline for Strategic and Operation Planning.

The college will begin a comprehensive review of its Strategic Plan immediately after accreditation activities are completed. The review will include:

- Mission, Vision, Values, and Diversity Statement.
- Core Themes (expected to remain largely unchanged).
- Goals and performance measures, many of which may be revised to provide more meaningful and future-focused data.

Strategic planning is not a state statutory requirement for higher education institutions, but it is a requirement for accreditation. The Strategic Planning Committee will include:

- Faculty, staff, and administrators.
- Members of Institutional Effectiveness and executive leadership teams.
- Student representatives.
- Additional faculty representatives from academic divisions.

Historically, trustees have not served directly on the committee but have provided feedback throughout the process. She noted that direct committee participation by trustees is possible but very highly time-intensive. The current practice for trustee involvement is to:

- provide trustees with regular updates.
- collect trustee feedback at key milestones.
- conduct a final in-depth review session before plan adoption.

The current Strategic Plan is concise and focused; built around three core themes and a limited set of measures; and actively used throughout the institution rather than sitting on a shelf. Administration favors a data-driven approach, relying on: skills-gap analyses, transfer studies, workforce and labor-market data, and program advisory committees.

In addition to the Strategic Plan, the college must develop a two-year operational plan with prioritized strategies collected from the college community. The executive team will have a draft Strategic Plan and two-year Operational Plan completed with budget in April. The board will discuss and provide feedback on the new Strategic Plan, new Operational Plan, and budget in May and will adopt them in June.

2024-26 Operational Plan

Dr. Dave Pelkey, Vice President for Student Services, reviewed outcomes from the 2024–26 Operational Plan, highlighting the college's commitment to continuous improvement, data-informed decision-making, and accountability across all areas.

The college completes a comprehensive two-year operational plan aligned with its long-term strategic goals. Input is gathered from the college community through data-informed forums focused on improvement opportunities. Strategies are prioritized by advisory groups, reviewed by the executive team, and aligned with research, accreditation expectations, and initiatives such as Aspen and Unlocking Opportunity. The plan is a working document, regularly reviewed and updated, with a strong emphasis on analyzing outcomes and learning from results.

Some review items:

- Craft Brewing, Distilling, and Tasting Room. The Tumwater Falls Quality Assurance Lab supports the craft brewing and distilling program by training students and conducting beverage testing required for commercialization. The Tasting Room is still in its growth phase and is not yet self-sustaining financially, but it has: increased customer traffic and repeat business; generated additional event revenue; and created new community partnerships and business opportunities. The college is exploring strategic investments in brewing equipment due to growing production demand. Opportunities are emerging for collaborative production partnerships with local industry.
- Student Housing. The housing project is a public-private partnership model, with a private partner building and operating housing on college land. Many community colleges already use similar models, particularly to address affordability and housing shortages.

- Student and Faculty Mentoring. Multiple mentoring efforts were consolidated into a more unified program with shared curriculum and leadership development goals. Participation has grown substantially as students see themselves as part of a larger campus community. Key challenges include: student time constraints; creating and sustaining engagement; and funding and compensation for student leaders. Faculty mentoring remains difficult due to technology limitations, workload concerns, and challenges matching students with faculty.
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts. The college is shifting from a centralized equity model to a decentralized approach, embedding responsibility across all divisions. They believe meaningful change occurs when accountability resides within operational units rather than with a single office or individual. Equity goals, measures, and performance expectations remain embedded throughout the institution's strategic planning, hiring processes, and evaluation systems. Trustees expressed support for this model, viewing it as more sustainable and better integrated into the organization's culture.

2026-27 Operational Plan

Dr. Dave Pelkey and Dr. Michelle Andreas reviewed the new 2026-27 Operation Plan highlighting the following:

- This is a one-year transitional plan. They view the coming year as a “gap year” before developing a new two-year strategic plan. This allows time to incorporate lessons from accreditation, Aspen-related work, and other feedback rather than creating a plan that will soon need revision.
- Focus on Priorities Rather Than Metrics: The draft plan identifies key goals for the year, but many outcomes and measures are intentionally undeveloped because accreditation is expected to significantly change how the college measures success. By the time those measures are finalized, a new strategic plan will already be in development.
- The plan has a new category and focus around sustainable campus infrastructure, including: fiscal sustainability, data infrastructure, and organizational capacity and effectiveness.
- Improving Data and Financial Reporting: ctcLink continues to create major reporting challenges. Financial and operational reports often take weeks to produce and analyze. To address this, the college is building its own data infrastructure that pulls data from ctcLink and combines it with sources such as Canvas, Navigate, FAFSA, and National Student Clearinghouse data. The data infrastructure will: provide faster, more actionable reporting; reduce staff time

spent manually compiling reports; support future AI capabilities; and potentially become a model for other colleges.

- They expect significant disruption from AI and evolving workforce needs, requiring more frequent review and adaptation of programs to ensure graduates are prepared for changing labor market demands.
- Accountability in higher education requirements are expected to become more prominent, regardless of political administration. They anticipate growing pressure from accreditors, legislators, and federal policymakers to demonstrate student outcomes, workforce relevance, and return on investment.
- The Trustees expressed interest in moving beyond line-by-line progress reports toward richer discussions about emerging trends, institutional strategy, data capabilities, workforce changes, culture and belonging efforts, accreditation, and long-term planning.

Board Committee Assignments

The Trustees confirmed their committee assignments for 2026-27:

- ACT Legislative Action Committee (Trustee Mark Brown, primary; Trustee Steven Drew, secondary)
- Board Finance Committee (Trustee Steven Drew, primary; Trustee Doug Mah, secondary)
- Foundation Board (Trustee Rozanne Garman, primary; Trustee Judy Hartmann, secondary)

Board Meeting Activities Schedule

The Board Meeting Activities Schedule was discussed, and there were still some open slots available. As mentioned in an earlier discussion, the executive team will propose topics for future board discussions that help trustees better understand ongoing initiatives and prepare for the development of the next strategic plan. The goal is to use this transitional year to build shared understanding before launching a new strategic planning cycle.

Board Chair Hartmann and Dr. Stokes will plan to coordinate how information related to upcoming goals and priority areas will be incorporated into the 2026-27 board meeting work schedule. Board-related topics and updates will be plugged into the work schedule as appropriate.

Trustees were asked to add all meeting dates to their calendars, pay special attention to March where there will be two meeting days due to the large number of faculty tenure interviews, and notify Chair Hartmann immediately if there are any scheduling conflicts.

President's 2026-2027 Goals

As part of Dr. Stokes' presidential evaluation, his 2026-27 internal and external goals were reviewed and discussed by the Board. The goals will be updated and finalized and provided to the Board.

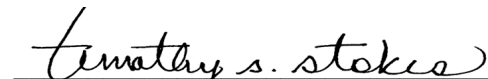
2025-26 Board Self-Assessment

The Board of Trustees annually completes a Board Self-Assessment. The 2025-26 Board Self-Assessment Report was compiled and prepared by the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT). The Board reviewed and discussed the report.

ADJOURNMENT 3:20 P.M.



JUDY HARTMANN, BOARD CHAIR
SOUTH PUGET SOUND COMMUNITY COLLEGE



TIMOTHY STOKES, SECRETARY
SOUTH PUGET SOUND COMMUNITY COLLEGE