Minutes

Board Members Present: Swati Adarkar, Erica Bestpitch, Gale Castillo, Sho Dozono, Maude Hines, Margaret Kirkpatrick, Thomas Imeson, Irving Levin, Stephanie Shao, Lindsay Stewart, Peter Stott, Chair Nickerson and President Wiewel (ex-officio)

Board Member(s) Not Present: Rick Miller, Christine Vernier

1. Call to Order/Roll/Declaration of Quorum

Chair Nickerson called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. Roll was taken, a quorum was present, and the meeting proceeded.

2. Open Comment

Olivia Pace spoke to the Board for approximately three minutes concerning the experiences of student workers on campus. She referenced a survey of 79 student workers. Chair Nickerson requested Ms. Pace provide the survey data for inclusion in the meeting minutes; it is attached.

3. Opening Comments and Reports

   a. Comments from Presiding Officer of the Portland State University Faculty Senate

   Brad Hanson provided the attached comments.

   b. Comments from the Associated Students of Portland State University

ASPSU President Liela Forbes presented ASPSU’s Executive Cabinet’s goals for the academic year, which include equitable representation, $15 minimum wage, campus public safety reform, campus sexual assault prevention, affordability, food security, and student fee autonomy. Please see PowerPoint presentation (http://www.pdx.edu/board/board-meetings; September 16, 2016 meeting.)

4. Consent Agenda

   a. Approval of Minutes from June 16, 2016 Meeting
   b. Approval of Minutes from August 4, 2016 Special Meeting
   c. Approval of the NWCCU Year One Report
Action: Stott moved that the Consent Agenda be approved. Dozono seconded. The Motion was approved unanimously.

5. Reports of Standing Committees of the Board

a. Executive & Audit Committee

Pete Nickerson, Chair of the Executive and Audit Committee, reported on the committee’s September 1, 2016 meeting. The committee discussed President Wiewel’s 2015-16 evaluation and 2016-17 goals, and received an update from Internal Audit regarding recent audit activities.

b. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Margaret Kirkpatrick, Chair of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee, reported on the committee’s September 8, 2016 meeting. The committee discussed and approved the NWCCU Year One Report, which the full Board just approved as part of the Consent Agenda. In addition, the committee was updated on reThink PSU initiatives and selected 12 initiatives from the Strategic Plan to focus future committee attention.

c. Finance and Administration Committee

Vice President Kevin Reynolds, on behalf of Finance and Administration Committee Chair Rick Miller, reported on the committee’s September 1, 2016 meeting. The committee discussed its 2016-17 goals; student accounts receivable and the Student Financial Wellness Center; summer enrollment and 4th Quarter financial information; the timeline for the 2015-16 audited financial statements; stress testing and contingency planning; and the status of a housing study to evaluate the feasibility of a new housing building and the submission to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission of a request to construct additional housing in order to retain the possibility of undertaking such a project in the event it is determined to be advisable.

6. Discussion Item: Presidential Search Update

Chair Nickerson reviewed the Board’s August 4, 2016 resolution regarding the presidential search process. Chair Nickerson reported that he has established the Presidential Search Advisory Committee (details may be found in the PowerPoint presentation (http://www.pdx.edu/board/board-meetings; September 16, 2016 meeting)) and that Isaacson Miller has been selected to be the search consultant following an RFP process.

Debra Hodson and Rebecca Isaacson, from Isaacson Miller, introduced themselves and explained the search firm’s background and role and outlined the search process. The search firm’s role is to serve as staff to the Presidential Search Advisory Committee and the Board. Ms. Hodson stressed that the ultimate decision is reserved for the Board. An important aspect of the search process is maintaining confidentiality until the appropriate time. It is critically important to maintain the integrity of the process and to treat all candidates well. The search firm and committee will be getting to work immediately.
7. Discussion of Presidential Evaluation and Approval of President Wiewel’s Annual Goals

Chair Nickerson discussed the process for evaluating President Wiewel’s 2015-16 performance. The Executive and Audit Committee has followed the process detailed in the Board’s policy on presidential evaluation. Castillo commented on the outstanding service of the President and how PSU has changed throughout his tenure. The Board decided to not go into executive session to further discuss the evaluation.

President Wiewel discussed his 2016-17 goals as presented to the Executive and Audit Committee on September 1, 2016. The goals are: (1) implementation of the Strategic Plan, (2) increasing University revenue, and (3) assisting with the presidential transition.

ACTION: Castillo moved that the Board adopt President Wiewel's 2016-17 goals as presented. Kirkpatrick seconded. The Motion was approved unanimously.

8. Discussion Items (con’t)

a. Report from the President

President Wiewel highlighted certain aspects of his written report, which is included in the Board docket. President Wiewel noted that US News and World Report has ranked PSU as number 9, up from number 14, in the “Most Innovated Schools” in the nation, and reminded the Board of upcoming Portland State of Mind events and the Viking’s football schedule.

b. Orientation Session: Introduction to GEU

Aaron Johnson and Christian Marsh provided an introduction to the Graduate Employee Union, the newest collective bargaining unit on campus. The GEU is affiliated with the AFT/AAUP and is made up of approximately 800 graduate teaching assistants, research assistants, and administrative assistants on campus. Wages, living expenses, and health insurance are of particular importance to the GEU. They are looking forward to bargaining with the administration and an open dialog.

c. Orientation Session: School of Business Administration

Dean Cliff Allen provided an introduction to the School of Business Administration. Please see the PowerPoint presentation (http://www.pdx.edu/board/board-meetings; September 16, 2016 meeting).

d. Sustainability Initiatives at Portland State University

Robert Liberty, Director of PSU’s Institute for Sustainable Solution, discussed PSU’s stainability leadership in education, research and community partnerships. Please see the PowerPoint Presentation (http://www.pdx.edu/board/board-meetings; September 16, 2016 meeting).

9. Adjourn

Chair Nickerson adjourned the meeting at 4:15pm.
Competing Priorities from the Faculty Perspective

The primary reason we are here is to provide a quality education for students. The faculty resonated with the original mission statement, because it embodied our personal and professional goals of bringing about student learning at the highest level. The quality of the education we offer is priority ONE for faculty, although any reference to it has been removed from the revised mission statement.

There are a number of external and internal pressures that often compete with this priority, and the possibility exists that other factors will erode the quality of education. Some examples of these pressures are:

1. Unfunded mandates, such as Oregon Legislative goals of 40-40-20. (Data is cited, indicating that the only state that has reached 40% of the adult population with degrees is Massachusetts. Oregon is 17th in the nation, with 31% college graduates. There is little data related to the percentage of adults with Associate degrees in other states, because this is not a common statistic.) The legislative goal amounts to a priority of awarding degrees in greater numbers. There is no provision for, nor assurance of the quality of the credential. If we simply award degrees without merit to meet a quota, we do a disservice to our students, our community, and to our profession.

2. There is internal and external pressure for growth in Student Credit Hours (SCH), so that more tuition dollars can be generated to offset the dire lack of funding by the state. ($4,132 per student in 2014). If faculty performance is defined by the generation of SCH, without evidence of student learning, we have a competing priority. Successful growth is not accomplished without commensurate investment. The pressure to add more students every year is not a sustainable solution.

3. The time it takes for a student to earn a degree depends on many factors, including their preparation, work ethic, family situation, available financing, and aptitude. From the faculty perspective, a degree represents accomplishments, knowledge, and skills. Of course, we all want our students for succeed and earn their degrees as efficiently as possible, whether it takes three years or eight years. The priority of a “4-year degree” competes with the concept of a well-educated person.

There are numerous other competing priorities, and the challenge we all face is to balance them in ways that best serve each student. It is the sincere hope on the part of the faculty that the search for a new President will result in a person whose top priority is the quality of the liberal education we provide, and who demonstrates the ability to balance this with lower priorities.
PSU Waged Campus Worker Survey Data (as of 9/20/16)

So far, 91.1% of our 79 survey respondents were/are student workers. Approximately 70% described their gender identity as either female or nonbinary; 10.1% identify as trans; 91.1% are between 16-35 years old; 64.5% describe their sexual orientation as something other than heterosexual; 63.3% are white; 34.1% are people of color; 20.2% are biracial or multiracial; around 1/4 report having learning disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, and/or chronic illnesses; and 11.4% said that they are the parent of a minor child, and/or the primary caregiver to an adult family member.

The Lives Of Our Campus Worker Respondents:
- 63% of our respondents hold 1-2 additional jobs while working their campus job
- 41.8% reported that during their time as a campus worker, they used the Portland State University Food Pantry
- 31.9% qualified for, and were receiving, SNAP, SSI, or some other form of public assistance while they were employed on campus.
- And just over 75% reported that while they held their campus job, their rent alone cost over $500 per month.

What Kinds Of Jobs Do They Perform For PSU?:
- The respondents’ job titles included (but were not limited to): Student Teacher; Student Office Assistant, Law Clerk, Projectionist, Audio-Visual Technician, Materials Management Team Member; Receptionist; Lab Monitor; Student Ambassador; Parking Enforcement Officer; Student Orientation Leader; Research Assistant; Graduate Administrative Assistant; Personal Trainer; Cashier; Film Screener; Information Desk Attendant; Grader; Office Coordinator; Educator; Garage Kiosk Attendant; Tutor; Resident Assistant; and Peer Mentor.
- 47.5% of the jobs described involved between 10-20 hours of work per week, on average; 20.7% involved an average of between 20-40 hours of work per week.
- Approximately 60% of the waged campus jobs our respondents worked paid them less than $11 per hour.
Here are some of our respondents’ answers to the question “How do you feel the university viewed you and your work?”

“In regards to my experience with SALP, I am regularly made to feel like a nuisance, like my student group is expendable, and that my job could go away at any time and it would be my own fault. I feel that my non-student superiors do not trust me. As for my TA experience, it doesn't feel like I'm working with the university at all, because I'm working with the individual professors, who have always shown me gratitude, respect, support and trust.”

“Working at Helen Gordon feels a bit removed from the actual university and being that it's it own entity and center, I never really had to deal with any superiors at the university level. That being said, my superiors at Helen Gordon have all treated me well, have been extremely helpful, and have given student workers a chance to eat at work and pick up extra hours if possible, which I appreciate. However, at the university level and in terms of wages, I do feel the labor (physical and mental) I do as a childcare worker, should be paid more than minimum wage.”

“The department I work for is essential to classroom instruction, yet is severely underfunded.”

“I feel that my position is treated as expendable. I am frequently asked to do work for people making over $100k per year.”

“Would be great if my wage was equal to inflation ($18.83/hour) and I didn’t have to be on food benefits while working two jobs.”

“I feel as though PSU views me as expendable, and not worthy of a living wage. As an out of state student, making ends meet has been an ongoing struggle during my 4+ years at PSU. My other job on campus is paid through scholarship, so accessing food stamps was always just out of reach unless I had three jobs and went to school full time, which nearly killed me. Student workers like me do a lot of the grunt work on campus and should be fairly compensated.”

“On the orientation team--very unprofessional. It was like they could get as much work out of us as they could to save money.”

“I just received a $X,000 donation for the population we work to service and my boss never said thank you or good job. She has also threatened to come to [my] home. I am constantly reminded that my labor is expendable and that their are other students who would like this position.”

“I had no contact with members of university administration during my period of employment even though the work I was doing was directly related to many of the goals and ideals they claim to stand for. The work that I did was outside the bounds of my job description, but I continued to earn minimum wage as I had few advocates in my particular department.”

“I felt like I was working long hours to help students through some very difficult adult issues, and PSU treated me as ‘optional.’”
“As a tutor, my experience and expertise were not monetarily valued as they should have been. I have been a high school English teacher, the head of the English department at the high school I worked at, and was a teaching assistant during my undergrad and previous graduate degree. I should be making substantially more than $12.50/hr. However, $15/hr for my work, whether it be as a teaching assistant, research assistant, or tutor, will not cover the cost of living.”

“I don’t know how the institution views me or my work but I know that my supervisor seems to genuinely care about student workers and very concerned with making our department a good place to learn and work. All the faculty we assist are appreciative. I’d have to guess that the institution is really appreciative that there are low income students who desperately need money and will accept any amount. Additionally as a neurologically impaired student who suffers from chronic fatigue I have no choice but to seek work on campus because adding to my commute would create an additional barrier to academic success.”

“I know my immediate supervisors value me, but I also know I’m not essential. We haven’t got that much of a budget here (somehow), and if there was an option to dissolve the part of the department in which I work, I imagine the higher-ups would not hesitate. The university as a whole has been VERY good to me as a transgender woman; I’m always very well-supported in those matters at the administrative level, even if things on an interpersonal level are not always ideal. Comparatively, for what people like me get, it is next to perfect. Better pay would, however, make managing general transition costs much more feasible.”

“The workload is ever increasing without adequate support resources. I am expected to work miracles within 40 hours every week and spend a lot of time correcting others’ errors due to poor processes and systems. There is a lack of accountability culture especially within the ranks of management. Any type of pay increase (including COLA) for myself and my coworkers is viewed by management as unnecessary. However, management believes they deserve several thousand dollar pay increases due to ‘merit’.”

“When I think of my treatment as a worker, I draw a distinction between the department I work for (which treats me very well) and the university as a whole (which has not treated me well). While my department acknowledges and values my work through supportive and respectful supervision, I have often felt underpaid and undervalued based on the university’s pay scale. What is more, I think the university’s administration would have paid me and shown respect for my work even less had it not been for our strong and vocal labor union, SEIU Local 503.”

“At my job in the library, I have always felt valued as a student worker. The managers ensure that you’re fully trained, understand all expectations, and feel comfortable asking questions. They work hard to plan around your class schedule and any time off that you request. It is a very positive work environment. The main drawbacks are only being paid minimum wage (although the managers are supportive of a higher wage) and the limitation of only being able to work up to 20 hours per week.”