



**Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees and  
Board of Trustees Retreat**  
May 20, 2020 & May 21, 2020

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**May 20, 2020**

**Trustees Attending:**

Monica Alexander  
Lucera Cox  
Karen Fraser  
Fred Goldberg  
Irene Gonzales  
David Nicandri  
Miguel Pérez-Gibson  
Ed Zuckerman

**Staff Present:**

George Bridges, President  
John Carmichael, Vice President for Finance and Operations  
Jennifer Drake, Provost and Vice President for Student and Academic Life  
Susan Harris, Executive Associate to the President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees  
Christine Hoffman, Public Relations and Outreach Manager  
Sandra Kaiser, Vice President for College Relations  
Jeremy Mohn, Director of Government Relations  
Eric Pedersen, Chief Enrollment Officer  
Amanda Walker, Vice President for Advancement and Executive Director of The Evergreen State College Foundation

**Others Present:**

Melinda Bratsch-Horsager, Geoduck Student Union (GSU) Representative to the Board of Trustees  
Cathy Flora, Staff Representative to the Board of Trustees  
Aileen Miller, Assistant Attorney General  
Paul Przybylowicz, Faculty Representative to the Board of Trustees

In accordance with Governor Inslee's Proclamation 20-28, and to curtail the spread of COVID-19 this meeting took place via Zoom. All participated remotely.

Chair Karen Fraser called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. A quorum was present.

**Chair's opening remarks**

Chair Karen Fraser reported that both the Finance Committee and Executive Committee have been meeting frequently. The presidential search is underway, and the Executive Committee is currently working on the selection of a consulting firm to assist with the search.

**President's report and agenda overview**

President George Bridges reported that we have a team working on planning commencement. Trustees will each record about a 30 second video to congratulate our graduating class and the production of these videos will be coordinated in the coming weeks.

President Bridges reported that three key themes—pride, persistence, and promise—inform our work in this time of uncertainty. He acknowledged our persistence despite the acknowledgement that the Coronavirus circulates in our broader community. He noted that our work will continue as the public health situation evolves and emphasized how well-positioned we are to adapt and innovate. Our promise is ultimately focused on Evergreen's future and our new organizational structure currently under development and discussion.

President Bridges then presented an overview of the meeting agenda.

President Bridges called on Vice President for Advancement Amanda Walker. Vice President Walker gave a brief overview of her pre-recorded update on the comprehensive fundraising campaign. Overall, we are early in the lifecycle of the comprehensive campaign. Despite the disruption brought by the pandemic, more than 13 million dollars has been raised, including 4.4 million dollars in new gifts, pledges, grants, and new planned gifts since July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. She noted that the agreement between the college and the foundation will need to be approved by both boards by the end of the fiscal year.

**Public Comment**

Chair Karen Fraser called for public comment. Executive Associate and Secretary to the Board of Trustees Susan Harris announced that two individuals signed up for public comment.

Student Anthony Draper submitted written comment for the Board of Trustees via email. Per the public comment policy, Secretary Harris distributed the written comment to the Trustees following the meeting.

Secretary Harris called forward Denbigh Perry to address the Board. Denbigh is an Alaska Native and a student in the MPA Tribal Governance Program. Denbigh reported that the courses have emphasized entrepreneurship and an economic framework inconsistent with tribal knowledge and tribal governance frameworks, adding that federal policies should be respected and integrated into the program.

**Student Trustee report**

Trustee Lucera Cox reported that the Student Recruitment and Success Committee has discussed Evergreen's shift to remote learning for students. Lucera received student feedback regarding how helpful the Emergency Fund and CARES Act funds have been during this time, and noting the ease of the application process. She thanked staff for supporting students.

**Representative reports**

Faculty Representative Paul Przybylowicz reported that there are concerns among faculty about enrollment next year and budget cuts. Colleagues are adjusting to the shifting landscape of COVID-19. He noted that faculty views on how to approach fall instruction during COVID-19 vary and suggested that clear guidelines would be helpful. Many faculty members are advocating for a decision to deliver fall quarter remotely for the safety of staff, students, and faculty. Faculty are curious about the presidential search and their role in the process, adding that many believe significant faculty and community participation is crucial.

Geoduck Student Union (GSU) Representative Melinda Bratsch-Horsager reported that the GSU has provided books to approximately 10 students through the book fund. The campus food bank is open. She reported that the main responsibility for GSU has been focused on providing consistency for students, focusing on humanity, and encouragement. She encouraged other members of the learning community to reach out and provide support and words of encouragement. Representative Bratsch-Horsager stated that she encourages and trusts that our Office of Civil Rights and administration will work to ensure that legal protections are upheld by the college with issues of racism.

Staff Representative Cathy Flora reported gratitude for the hard-working staff on and off campus, some of who feel stressed in this new form of operations. Representative Flora shared concern for staff who do not have access to technology and encouraged supervisors to supply technology equipment when possible.

### **Presidential search consultant**

The Request for Proposals Committee recommended the college employ the services of the Karras Consulting firm to assist the college in the presidential search. Karras Consulting would in turn contract with an outside higher education consultant to bring in additional expertise.

**Motion 2020-09** Trustee David Nicandri moved to accept the recommendation made by the Request for Proposals Committee and delegate authority to Vice President for Finance and Operations and the college's procurement team to complete the procurement process and contract execution. The motion was seconded by Trustee Irene Gonzales and passed on a voice vote.

### **Nominating committee**

**Motion 2020-10** Trustee Fred Goldberg moved to appoint Trustees Alexander, Nicandri and Zuckerman, to the 2020-2021 nominating committee. The motion was seconded by Trustee Irene Gonzales and passed on a voice vote.

### **Board Policy**

**Motion 2020-11** Trustee Fred Goldberg moved to approve the revisions to the Emeritus Status policy as proposed. The motion was seconded by Trustee David Nicandri and passed on a voice vote.

### **Updates**

#### Government relations

In addition to a pre-recorded video presentation included in the Board materials, Director of Government Relations Jeremy Mohn reported that the state revenue forecast anticipates a loss of 3.8 billion in this biennium and 3.2 billion in the next (2021-2023). There is consideration of a special session.

### Enrollment update

Chief Enrollment Officer Eric Pedersen reported that incoming first-year applications have been monitored closely and the pace of incoming applications has been increasing. The college is seeing more resident applicants at this time. Trends observed by Enrollment leaders are similar for the majority of the public four-year institutions in Washington. Chief Enrollment Officer Pedersen described enrollment tactics currently being used to recruit students, such as building a community using digital technology and partnering with South Puget Sound Community College.

It was suggested that enrollment might increase overall similar to trends experienced in the prior recession. However, it is also possible that COVID-19 will disrupt high school seniors' plans: in one survey, 80% of graduating seniors indicated they intend to change their college enrollment plans. In another national survey of students with a similar profile to Evergreen's, 57% of respondents said that they may delay attendance in the fall.

### **Budget**

Vice President for Finance and Operations John Carmichael gave a brief overview of his pre-recorded update. He reported that the budget will be reduced to respond to anticipated enrollment levels. The outcomes of legislative decisions and enrollment are not yet known, however planning is underway for a 5-10% budget reduction, which will be shared across the institution, rather than carried by a particular group or division. The final recommendation for tuition costs and the college's biennial spending plan will come to the Trustees for approval in June 2020.

The meeting recessed May 20, 2020 at 2:52 p.m.



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**Staff Present:**

George Bridges, President  
John Carmichael, Vice President for Finance and Operations  
Jennifer Drake, Provost and Vice President for Student and Academic Life  
Susan Harris, Executive Associate to the President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees  
Steven Hendricks, Member of the Faculty  
Sandra Kaiser, Vice President for College Relations  
Eric Pedersen, Chief Enrollment Officer  
Amanda Walker, Vice President for Advancement and Executive Director of The Evergreen State College Foundation

**Others Present:**

Melinda Bratsch-Horsager, Geoduck Student Union (GSU) Representative to the Board of Trustees  
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Chair Karen Fraser called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A quorum was present.

**Chair's opening remarks**

Chair Karen Fraser reported that strategic planning and future vision will be an emphasis in today's meeting.

**President's report and agenda overview**

President George Bridges noted that today's discussion, regarding our vision and future business model, could not be timelier for Evergreen and higher education at large. COVID-19, has disrupted the higher institution business model, which broadly had become less sustainable in recent decades. He noted that

very few schools have been willing to reimagine their vision and looked critically at their business models. Our work over the last few years provides a platform for growth and innovation.

President Bridges then presented an overview of the meeting agenda.

### **Presidential search consultant**

Chair Karen Fraser introduced Dennis Karras and Marissa Karras from Karras Consulting, who will be working on the presidential search. Dennis expressed their thanks in being selected. Dennis and Marissa introduced themselves and discussed their deep experience conducting executive-level searches.

They added that their searches incorporate an equity lens and their practice embraces the values of equity, diversity and inclusion. During the search, they typically conduct outreach to indigenous peoples, people of color, members of the LGBTQ+ community, women, veterans, and other groups often underrepresented in leadership positions, owing in part to their network of contacts in organizations that enable their access to a diverse pool of candidates. 58% of the individuals they have placed in executive-level positions have been women or people with marginalized identities. They have also developed an implicit bias training that they have provided to other boards, commissions, and trustees so that those involved in interviewing candidates are aware of implicit bias.

### **Academic Directions**

Provost and Vice President for Student and Academic Life, Jennifer Drake, reported on the introduction to the academic directions proposal that was presented to the faculty for a vote.

Faculty member Steven Hendricks reported that a student-centered model is crucial for academic directions. Included in the proposal is a name change from The Evergreen State College to Evergreen University which reflects the complexity of our institutional mission and structures, comprised of multiple schools.

There is an opportunity to restructure paths of study, integrated with schools, to present clear curricular areas of focus, which reflect the uniqueness of our learning and teaching model. Interdisciplinary schools can serve this purpose and create a sense of belonging for students as well as make it easier for advisors to point students in the direction of their interests. Areas of potential curricular growth include psychology, sociology, business, non-profit management, climate justice and sustainability, art, design, and computer science. Student and faculty interests also focus on transformative justice, legal studies, and LGBTQ and gender studies.

In addition, the proposal also includes advising and coaching for students, revived transcripts, and e-portfolios to support students and demonstrate their progress throughout their learning process. Other additions and ways of structuring the student experience include first year programs, levels of study, capstones, and credentials and certificates.

The proposed model integrates undergraduate studies by combining evening and weekend studies, full-time, part-time, and low-residency offerings, as well as Tacoma and indigenous studies programs. The proposed model will allow for increased collaboration between faculty, as well as, coordinating planning and delivery.

The faculty will be voting on final version of the new academic model during Week 10. The new academic direction will be brought back to the Board for review and consideration.

### **Market Analysis**

Chief Enrollment Officer, Eric Pedersen, and Dean, Larry Geri, reported on a market analysis that was recently done to assess if the new model will attract enough new students to be viable, increase enrollment, and lead to a stronger financial position.

After an overview of higher education enrollment trends, they noted that our enrollment currently depends primarily on students enrolling directly from high school and transfer students. As we look to increase enrollment, we also need to focus on new populations of students: “new majority” students, adult learners who have earned some college credits, but have not completed a degree, and “recession re-toolers” who may wish to upgrade their skills in a post-pandemic environment.

Chair Karen Fraser suggested scheduling additional time to continue discussions on the academic model.

Executive Associate to the President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees Susan Harris will share copies of the market study presentation with the Trustees.

### **Business model**

Vice President for Finance and Operations John Carmichael discussed the college’s business model in the context of proposed new academic directions, describing the various inputs into the model. Vice President Carmichael noted the relationship between enrollment and revenue, noting that the college has a point at which it breaks even: when revenues cover the fixed and variable costs needed to operate. In our current model, Evergreen is not covering expenses with current revenue. By developing and delivering new programs, we will seek new revenue to address this imbalance.

### **Strategic Planning Process**

Vice President for Advancement, Amanda Walker, discussed the mission and vision for the strategic planning process. She highlighted the many threads of strategic work, in order to create a road map for the future. This plan is not intended to meet the challenge described in the Board’s discussion of the business model, but be an agile and flexible plan.

Vice President Walker noted that the components and structure will include a vision and mission statement that align with one another. It will also include major goals and a plan for how to achieve them, as well as metrics to measure performance related to each objective. Strategic work is underway that will be integrated into a comprehensive plan, including New Academic Directions/Big Bets, climate, budget planning, renewal, and the comprehensive campaign. Owing to these many processes, the plan will incorporate views of many stakeholders over many months, including students, faculty, and staff.

Vice President Tina Kuckkahn-Miller facilitated a strategic planning discussion to articulate a vision and identify a path forward.

Vice President Walker shared that the strategic plan will come to the Board of Trustees for approval at a future meeting.

**Dashboard**

President George Bridges reported that a dashboard is needed to include metrics and measures associated with the new strategic plan. It will provide a way to measure the college's performance in achieving key goals, enable making data-informed and data-driven decisions, and make connections across silos. The dashboard can measure areas such as retention, spending, costs of delivery, reserves, fundraising and campaign progress. Leveraging of the dashboard will require decision-making, transparency, consistency, conversation, discovery, and engagement. The dashboard is also an aspect of the risk management framework that provides a ground-level view for further considerations.

It was suggested that the dashboard include qualitative data as well as quantitative. The retention metric could also be predicted by considering student reactions to programs.

An additional suggestion included using a color chart in order to identify a hierarchy of areas that need immediate attention. It may also be valuable to compare our data with other institutions periodically. Possibly a working peer group with other institutions could be formed to enable benchmarking.

**Closing reflections, next steps, takeaways**

There was a general consensus to continue the conversation about strategic planning, especially as it will establish focus for the presidential search.

The Board requested opportunities to engage more visibly in the Evergreen community and also to be apprised of next steps on issues brought to their attention, especially those received by way of public comment.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.



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Karen Fraser, Chair



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Irene Gonzales, Secretary