



## Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees

March 24, 2021

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**Trustees Attending:**

Melinda Bratsch-Horsager  
Karen Fraser  
Fred Goldberg  
Irene Gonzales  
David Nicandri  
Miguel Pérez-Gibson  
Ed Zuckerman

**Absent:**

Monica Alexander

**Staff Present:**

George Bridges, President  
John Carmichael, Vice President for Finance and Operations  
Susan Harris, Executive Associate to the President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees  
Connie Gardner, Title IX Coordinator  
Sandra Kaiser, Vice President for College Relations  
David McAvity, Interim Provost and Vice President for Student and Academic Life  
Jeremy Mohn, Director of Government Relations  
Eric Pedersen, Chief Enrollment Officer  
Jeannette Smith, Interim Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Engagement  
Trevor Speller, Interim Vice Provost  
Laurel Uznanski, Associate Vice President for Human Resources Services  
Amanda Walker, Vice President for Advancement and Executive Director of The Evergreen State College Foundation

**Others Present:**

Dennis Karras, Karras Consulting  
Marissa Karras, Karras Consulting  
Aileen Miller, Assistant Attorney General  
Paul Przybylowicz, Faculty Representative to the Board of Trustees  
Trygve Vandal, Geoduck Student Union (GSU) Representative to the Board of Trustees  
Rod Younker, Partner and CEO Summit Law Group

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 9:01 a.m. and Secretary Miguel Pérez-Gibson confirmed a quorum.

**Chair's opening remarks**

Chair Karen Fraser thanked Trustee Ed Zuckerman for serving as the Board of Trustee representative to the Board of Governors.

**President's report and agenda overview**

President George Bridges reported that we are advancing the college in significant areas as detailed in the reports today. Direct admission initiatives are underway in partnership with enrollment and marketing teams. There are reports of diminished applications coming in from high school seniors due to the COVID environment, the majority being students of color and from low-income backgrounds. Evergreen is partnering with six local school districts to provide admittance letters to students who qualify for Evergreen. The willingness and eagerness of high school educators to partner in this work has been encouraging. He noted that the college should know if this initiative will be successful by the end of April, when enrollment data is available. The Equity Symposium will take place virtually April 13-15 and all are encouraged to attend.

**Public comment**

Susan Harris, Executive Associate to the President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees, announced that one person signed up for public comment: faculty member Nancy Koppelman. She reported that she and faculty member Eirik Steinhoff are working on a publication for Evergreen's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The publication focuses on a shared understanding of the college and features the *Evergreen In-Context Archives Project* which includes recordings of student presentations regarding the high value of learning about the history of Evergreen. These presentations reflect challenges, aspirations, unity and strength.

Chair Karen Fraser suggested some excerpts be added to the website. Trustee Ed Zuckerman asked if these materials could be available to the presidential applicants. The Chair noted that this will be discussed at a later time.

**Student Trustee report**

Student Trustee Melinda Bratsch-Horsager reported that for many, herself included, this has been one of the hardest years. She reported that she has learned more about people and the Evergreen administration this year than in all others combined. She shared that she is honored to act as Trustee and hold the college accountable on behalf of students. Trustee Bratsch-Horsager shared that some college leaders have left in fear of instability, and others understand the capability of the college. She commented that it is important to tell the truth to students, rather than avoiding unpleasant truths.

**Representative reports**

Faculty Representative Paul Przybylowicz submitted a written report to be distributed to the Board of Trustees.

**Presidential search**

Chair Karen Fraser reviewed the search process timeline up to this point and reported that the college received 60-70 applications. The Search Committee interviewed 12 candidates and recommended five to the Board of Trustees. The Board deliberated for six hours on the previous Monday, then following in open public meeting, voted to interview seven candidates: the five recommended by the Search Committee to the Board of Trustees, plus two additional candidates.

**Motion  
2021-10**

Trustee Irene Gonzales motioned to delegate presidential contract negotiations to the Board Chair, Karen Fraser with assistance from the Assistant Attorney General, subject to final contract approval of the Board. The motion was seconded by Trustee Fred Goldberg and passed on a voice vote.

### **Rulemaking for code of student rights and responsibilities**

Title IX Coordinator Connie Gardner reported that she held a public hearing with Lori Johnson last week where they talked through the changes to the Title IX rulemaking. Prior to the forum, emails were sent to the campus community asking for questions they would like addressed during the hearing and only one question was received. She shared that it is unknown if the Biden administration will institute or reverse changes to the regulations. As such, the college will need to move forward with the regulations in place. The proposed emergency rulemaking is designed to fill the time gap so that students can be supported before the new regulations are fully implemented.

**Motion 2021-11** Trustee Ed Zuckerman motioned to approve the permanent rulemaking as proposed. The motion was seconded by Trustee Irene Gonzales and passed on a voice vote.

**Motion 2021-12** Trustee Fred Goldberg motioned to approve the emergency rulemaking as proposed. The motion was seconded by Trustee Irene Gonzales and passed on a voice vote.

### **COVID update**

Vice President for College Relations Sandra Kaiser reported that 26% of Washingtonians have received the vaccine and Thurston County has seen a decline in cases by 15%. Pierce County has recently seen an increase in cases. There have been 12 confirmed cases in the Evergreen Community. Leave is now being offered to Evergreen employees to use for their vaccine appointments. Our policy regarding a 14-day absence from campus, after out of state travel, is being shortened to match the Governor's guidelines in this regard. She shared that a back-to-campus guidance packet will be sent to the campus community in the next four weeks, outlining details of our return in the fall. On April 19<sup>th</sup>, there will be a community forum to address questions related to COVID-19 planning and procedures.

Interim Vice-Provost Trevor Speller added that he and his team are working with faculty to turn around fall curriculum. The catalog will present to students programs that will be in-person or have in-person components and which will be entirely remote. This is estimated to be completed by early first-year registration, on April 26<sup>th</sup>. Students can expect to have a choice to participate in online or hybrid classes. In the hybrid model, we expect larger gatherings, workshops and lectures will be remote, and small group work in seminar, studios and labs will be possible in-person. The college is working on offering in-person student service opportunities as much as possible.

### **Update on Strategic Plan: Student academic success and support (Goal 1) and support for community, state, and nation (Goal 2).**

#### *Student Recruitment and Success Committee update*

The Student Recruitment and Success Committee of the Board include Trustee Melinda Bratsch-Horsager, Trustee Monica Alexander, Trustee David Nicandri, and Trustee Miguel Pérez-Gibson. Trustee Pérez-Gibson reported that they have heard in a faculty report that some faculty lack support for New Academic Directions due to initiative fatigue and believing that there are more direct ways they should be focusing on students. A flexibility initiative has been discussed understanding that the college student profile is changing, and students are juggling work and family. He noted that Arizona State has implemented this, and they reduce their tuition for remote classes. There is also a low residency option, which seems to be a responsible way to reach out to the new traditional student. Trustee Pérez-Gibson shared that this requires developing a student enrollment strategic plan, not an operational plan, that defines what we intend to do and the goals we have regarding enrollment. There are a few phases to implementation. The college needs to attract students away from other institutions and target the

students who would most benefit. This may also include expanding certain services and translating materials.

#### *Student and Academic Life update*

Interim Provost and Vice President for Student and Academic Life David McAvity reported that Student Affairs, in partnership with all who support students, have been developing a proposal, Re-Imaging Student Affairs, with feedback from the campus community. The focus remains on enrollment and the initiatives and projects that will support enrollment. This includes Paths of Study and certificates and micro-credentials. There will be website updates soon on the Paths of Study. The proposed School of Professional Studies would offer four certificates and degree completion programs. In the spring we are sharing the proposals with faculty and engaging them in the process. In the fall of 2022, we hope to have many certificates available to students. He indicated that many adult learners want to learn in flexible contexts, and we are brainstorming how we can make those options visible.

Interim Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Engagement Jeannette Smith reported that Student Affairs has been working with a cross-divisional team on a redesign of Student Affairs that is guided through student development theory, social justice, literature, and student voice. Over 200 staff and a handful of faculty and students have been involved in these discussions with intentional focus on inclusive shared governance. She shared that they are charged with determining which recommendations will move forward and how they will be implemented. Associate Dean Smith clarified that students are involved in the process.

#### **Executive session and OPMA exemption**

Chair Karen Fraser announced the Board would be going into a combined OPMA exempt and an executive session, pursuant to the following sections of the Open Public Meetings Act, RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) to evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for public employment; RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) obtain advice from legal counsel on matters in which public discussion could result in adverse legal or financial consequences; and RCW 42.30.140(4) to engage in planning, strategy, or review of proposals related to collective bargaining.

She announced that the Board will be in session until 11:20 a.m. unless notified that the time is extended. No final action will be taken in Executive Session. The open session resumed at 11:40 a.m. after two extensions.

#### **Action items**

**Motion 2021-13** Trustee Irene Gonzales motioned to approve the SSSU Management Team. The motion was seconded by Trustee Fred Goldberg and passed on a voice vote.

**Motion 2021-14** Trustee David Nicandri motioned to approve the UFE Management Team. The motion was seconded by Trustee Ed Zuckerman and passed on a voice vote.

#### **GSU Representative report**

GSU Representative Trygve Vandal, reported that many students have heard upcoming budget challenges and are concerned whether student demand for courses will be prioritized as students are not able to receive some of the industry specific skills and classes they seek. Representative Vandal shared that it is appreciated that the New Academic Directions initiative allows for student involvement in discussions as it fosters a sense of belonging when students are integrated into initiative work and committees. Representative Vandal shared that some students are concerned about coming back to in-

person classes due to COVID and asked that updates and information regarding the return to campus be prioritized.

Provost McAvity offered to meet with Representative Vandal regarding concerns voiced on student fees.

### **Update on strategic plan: strengthen our financial position (Goal 3)**

#### *Government relations update*

Director of Governor Relations Jeremy Mohn reported that the Senate will release their budget tomorrow and the House on Friday. It is not expected that the two budgets will be too far apart. The American Rescue Plan for Higher Education will provide one-time federal funding that will mostly be allocated to student financial aid. The state revenue reported another 1.2 million dollars that was not anticipated.

#### *Enrollment update*

Chief Enrollment Officer Eric Pedersen reported that the Native Pathways Program has recently received two more applicants and the Master in Teaching program (MiT) has received 10 more applicants. It is clear there is high demand for our redesigned MiT program. He shared that the college is not seeing significant enrollment changes beyond the pandemic; the applicant pool is somewhat smaller, we have more out of state first year transfers, more geographically diverse applicants, and students with higher academic profiles. This year's pool is slightly less diverse, which is consistent with the national average and the college plans to address this. Chief Pedersen also noted that the college has a lower number of students who are qualifying for the Pell grant and fewer FAFSA filers with no family contribution anticipated.


#### *Finance and Budget Committee update*

Vice President for Finance for Budget and Operations John Carmichael reported that the budget team is deeply concerned and committed to finding solutions to the budget shortfall. Based on early application data, we are beginning to prepare for budget reductions. Vice President Carmichael reported that the operating budget will require a 13% reduction in the next year and 4% the following year. He shared that the spending plan will be presented to the Board during the June meeting. A revised forecast will be made after more information is available on spring quarter enrollment. Furloughs will continue for employees this fiscal year, but the college currently has no agreements for future furloughs.

#### *Campaign report*

Vice President for Advancement Amanda Walker reported that the college has received diverse funding for initiatives and student aid. The campaign has received over 20 million dollars, including 6.8 million dollars this fiscal year. Recently, the college received a grant for almost a million dollars from Puget Sound Energy to do some needed upgrades to our steam systems which may allow the college to reduce the natural gas emissions by 15%. Vice President Walker shared that the college is also supplying direct student aid and emergency funds to students. Finances is often the top reason students leave Evergreen and the college is working to off-set this. She also reported that the virtual Art of Giving event has kicked-off and we are 55% to our goal of raising \$200,000 for the scholarship fund.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

  
Karen Fraser, Chair

  
Miguel Pérez-Gibson, Secretary