Grays Harbor College provides meaningful and engaging learning opportunities and support services to enhance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of our students and support the cultural and economic needs of our community.

Grays Harbor College Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

Board Meeting: The Board meeting was convened on September 9, 2025, at 1:02 PM.

Members Present: Dr. Paula Akerlund, Jim Sayce

Members on Zoom: Astrid Aveledo

Others Present: Holly Bringman, Dr. Aaron Coby, Ja'Shonae Cooks, Derek Edens, Penny James, Dr. Carli Schiffner, Lori Christmas, Ariel Finfrock, Julie Randall, Melissa Lenz, Cassandra Smith, Jason Gordon, Brian Mahoney, James Bergstrom, Isaac Humiston, Lisa Getty, Sam Rayment, Michael Priest, MJ Soboleff, Aryssa Aburto, Cristal Ramierez, Sarah Dalrymple, Matthew Barber, Arlen Harris, Lisa Smith, Alexis Palmer

Others Present on Zoom: Alexis Montoure, Annalee Atwell-Tobar, Annette Gerchak, Ashley Bowie-Gallegos, Barb Dyer, Carla Idohl-Corwin, Cassaundra Smith, Cathy LeCompte, Cheyenna Carroll, Erin Tofte, Roxa Banks, Holly Duffy, Jackie Blumberg, Jonni Dawson, Kathy Young, Leslie Coffman, Marjie Stratton, Matt Holder, Phil Petheram, Sydni Yager

A study session focusing on the upcoming Legislative Session and State Board Priorities presented by Arlen Harris, Legislative Director at the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, began at 12:00 PM.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM. Roll call was taken by Ja'Shonae Cooks.

II. Safety statement

Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called attention to the safety statement.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Land Acknowledgment

Jim Sayce read the Land Acknowledgment. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund thanked him for doing so.

V. Agenda Adoption

Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion to adopt the agenda. Jim Sayce moved to approve the agenda, and Astrid Aveledo seconded the motion. The motion carried.

VI. Public Comments

No public comments.

VII. Celebration

Dr. Carli Schiffner invited Derek Edens to recognize Melissa Lenz, who was selected as the Staff Training for Technical and Community Colleges (STTACC) Region A Classified Employee of the Year. Region A includes five colleges as well as the State Board. Melissa has been with the College for 16 years in various roles. She consistently goes above and beyond to support and mentor students, and she brings a positive attitude to her work. She also serves on the Staff Development and Training Committee (SDTC).

VIII. New Employee Introductions

Erin Tofte introduced new employees. James Bergstrom, Campus Safety and Security Coordinator, started on August 18 and has a background in law enforcement. Leslie Coffman, Interim Dean at Stafford Creek, is new to Washington and shared that she is happy to be part of the College. Alexis Palmer, Cashier, began by supporting clerical tasks and serving as a backup cashier. Alexis Montoure, Nurse Navigator, graduated from the Nursing Program at Grays Harbor College and expressed her happiness to be back working alongside the faculty who taught her.

IX & X. Action Items & Standing Reports

Action Items

1. Approval of August 12, 2025 Minutes
    a. A correction was noted on page 4 of the minutes under the President's Report, correcting the date from September 14 to August 14 for the Stafford Creek graduation.
    b. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion to approve the August 12, 2025, meeting minutes as amended. Jim Sayce moved to approve the minutes, and Astrid Aveledo seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Standing Reports

1. **Student Government Report** (Isaac Humiston)

    Isaac Humiston reported that Student Government and the Student Life team have returned from summer break and are currently in training. He introduced the new Associated Student Government (ASG) Officers: Lisa Getty, Executive Vice President; Sam Rayment, Vice President for Diversity and Awareness; and Michael Priest, Vice President for Community Engagement. He also introduced the Senators present: MJ Soboleff, representing the Diversity and Equity Center; Aryssa Alberto, representing Athletics; Annette Gerchak, representing Phi Theta Kappa; and Cristal Ramirez, representing TRIO.

    Humiston noted that Ibrahim Bedrous will begin on September 22 as the new Associate Director of Student Life for Equity, Inclusion, and Engagement, and he expressed thanks to Sarah Dalrymple for her support.

    Student Life is hosting New Student Orientation tomorrow, and thanks was given to Shelly Hoffman for her assistance. Lunch will take place at 11:45 AM in the cafeteria, and it's open to all on campus to join and mingle with new students.

    He added that ASG will resume session on September 22 and will provide a full report at the October meeting. Goals for the year include strengthening ASG's presence and accessibility to students, advocating for a more student-centered Work Study model, and expanding events that promote well-being, academic success, and a strong sense of belonging on campus.

2. **Classified Staff Report** (Jared Stratton)

   There were no updates beyond the written report.

3. **Represented Exempt Staff Report** (Shelly Hoffman)

   There were no updates beyond the written report. Appreciation was expressed to Shelly Hoffman for uplifting the College's presence in the community.

4. **Faculty report** (Shiloh Winsor & Tom Kuester)

   There is no report due to the summer intermission.

5. **Administrative Services Report** (Jason Gordon)

   Jason Gordon presented the annual budget and reported that the College concluded FY25 with a revenue surplus of approximately $1.13 million. He noted that much of this surplus was due to a 25 percent increase in Running Start revenue, and last year's projection did not include summer Running Start enrollment. State revenue accounted for about 70 percent of total revenue, while local revenue accounted for about 30 percent. The College is required to have a minimum of 10 percent in the Board of Trustees reserves, which currently equals about $2.8 million. Debt is below 3 percent, which is consistent with last year. There are approximately $6.8 million in designated reserve funds and $3.7 million in undesignated reserves. The comprehensive budget for FY25 was about $37.9 million. Bookstore performance improved, with revenue increasing by 28 percent to $394,000 and gross profit by $125,000. Although the bookstore experienced a net loss of about $116,000, this was less than the previous year, and parameters are in place to further reduce losses.

   Looking ahead, Gordon emphasized the importance of anticipating financial pressures and remaining fiscally conservative. Rising costs of goods, services, and utilities, along with an estimated $400,000 increase in health insurance premiums, will add to this year's expenses. Additional costs include operational expenses for the tulalW Student Center building, which is no longer under warranty, and the $323,000 reduction from the Office of Financial Management. He noted that the College must also account for an additional $260,000 loss next year due to changes in the allocation model, with the potential for further state cuts depending on the economic forecast.

   Gordon emphasized the importance of continuing quarterly budget reviews, closely monitoring revenue, enrollment, and reserves, and proactively managing operational costs. He added that the budget development process will continue to be refined. Overall, the College is financially stable but should remain fiscally conservative.

   Dr. Carli Schiffner noted that historically, enrollment tended to grow during economic downturns, but since the pandemic, trends have become less predictable. In response to a question about the impact of a government shutdown, Gordon responded that reserves could be utilized if needed. He noted that the surplus from this past year has been allocated to reserves. Dr. Schiffner added that the College will continue to advocate at the state level to maintain funding and for fully funded COLAs.

6. **Human Resources Report** (Erin Tofte)

   Erin Tofte reported that there were no additions beyond the written report. She expressed appreciation to Lisa Krause for her work with hiring and onboarding, and to all of the hiring committees for their efforts.

7. **Instruction & Student Services Report** (Holly Bringman)

   Holly Bringman provided an enrollment update, reporting that as of this morning, total enrollment was at 1,377 students, including Running Start and state-funded students. Four-year degree program enrollments are increasing, and she gave a "shout-out" to Ariel Finfrock, Pat Mahoney, and Dr. Lyn Lanka for their efforts. She noted that Student Services and Instruction have been actively engaged in increasing enrollment. There's also been collaboration across departments including TRIO, the Business Office, Athletics, the Marketing team, and others on campus. Enrollment Days in August brought in over 100 students, and yesterday 67 students enrolled, and as of today, 41 students have enrolled. The recent call campaign resulted in about a 21 percent rate of return of students getting enrolled, and low-enrolled classes now have waitlists. Bringman gave a leadership "shout-out" to Ashley Bowie-Gallegos, Ava Garcia, Heidi Wood, Julie Randall, and Shelly Hoffman. She added that the team will debrief to evaluate what worked and what did not, with the goal of integrating successful practices into regular operations moving forward.

   Bringman also provided an update on Athletics. Recent student-athlete orientations saw strong participation, and students also attended Loggers Playday in force. Jessica Madison has successfully recruited 11 players for the softball team. Jody Pope shared that this year feels very different from past years, with new coaches who have worked hard to build rosters and foster a new culture within their programs. Bringman noted that the College currently has men's basketball, softball, and baseball teams. The College is also in the process of hiring a women's basketball coach, with the goal of beginning competition in 2026.

8. **President's Report** (Dr. Carli Schiffner)

   Dr. Carli Schiffner highlighted the Kick-Off Week brochure and encouraged participation in events as schedules allow. She noted that campus will be closed on Monday, September 15, for the all-employee sessions. A Family Barbecue will be held on the evening of Tuesday, September 16. On Friday, September 19, an employee art exhibit will take place, along with an open house for Running Start's new location and the Tutoring Center.

   Dr. Schiffner reported that changes are on the horizon with the allocation formula and College funding. The Allocation Model Review Committee (AMRC) gave its final presentation to the State Board, which brought forward two requests. The first was approval of the recommendations as presented, which was approved, and the second was to extend the implementation timeline from four years to six years. The State Board acknowledged the six-year request but did not take a vote to approve it. The AMRC will review the notes, consult with the presidents, and bring forward another recommendation in the fall. The new allocation model is scheduled to begin on July 1, 2026, regardless of the final implementation timeline.

   She also noted that changes with the federal government have created uncertainty around federal grant assurances, and the State Board and the Attorney General's Office are working to provide colleges with guidance and recommendations on how to proceed.

   Dr. Schiffner introduced the College's new Assistant Attorney General, Matthew Barber, who has been with the Attorney General's Office for five years and previously worked for the Oregon Department of Education.

She concluded her report by drawing attention to the packet materials, including a newsletter from the Stafford Creek Student Voices Council and a news article highlighting Stafford Creek's recent graduation.

a. **Accreditation** (Kristy Anderson)

Kristy Anderson reported that the Year Six report was submitted prior to the September 6 deadline. The report focused on compliance with policies and procedures, identifying areas where the College is meeting standards and areas for improvement. She noted that there are a few areas of continuous improvement, including conducting meaningful program reviews, ensuring proper storage of student complaints, and documenting distance education to demonstrate how students who are not on campus receive quality interactions.

Anderson outlined three key focus areas for the upcoming year: student learning outcomes and assessments, guided pathways work, and enrollment management. She added that in 2025–26, the College will prepare the Year Seven report, which will emphasize student progress, achievement, and learning outcomes. That report will be submitted by August 1, 2026, followed by a peer evaluation visit in October 2026. Dr. Carli Schiffner recognized Anderson's leadership in guiding the College's accreditation efforts.

b. **Phone System Update** (Derek Edens)

Derek Edens shared an update on the College's phone system—including data regarding the phone system traffic. Between March 3 and June 30, the pickup call rate was 80 percent, and since changes were implemented, it has increased to 96 percent. He noted that call volume remains high during peak times, and the College is exploring the implementation of a phone tree to allow callers to connect directly with key areas. Edens will provide follow-up data from the Fall Quarter to give a broader perspective.

9. Board Reports

a. Foundation Meeting Report (Astrid Aveledo & Lisa Smith)

Astrid Aveledo reported that the Foundation Board was on break in August and will hold its next meeting this Thursday. Lisa Smith shared that in July, the Foundation Board voted to partner with the College on the annual appeal for the Bishop Center, which will be launched in early October. The Foundation will also be tabling at Kick-Off Week for employee giving. Smith added that $108,000 in scholarships has been distributed to 59 Grays Harbor College students, with a celebration planned for September 24. The Foundation also concluded its partnership with the College on awarding Bishop scholarships, totaling approximately $30,000 to 44 students, 11 of whom were from Grays Harbor College.

b. Board Art Committee Report (Astrid Aveledo)

Dr. Carli Schiffner reported that she connected with Earl Davis regarding the signage work he's completing, and a draft is anticipated by the end of next week. She is also working with Hailey McGraw on the November Arts Celebration. Events will include the Fall Art Gala on Friday, November 7, followed by the Bishop Center and Plank Island Productions' performance of Stranger Sings. On November 14, Derek Sheffield, Washington State Poet Laureate, will speak on campus, and earlier that day, he will collaborate with Stafford Creek. On Friday, November

21, the focus will be on an art talk with Earl Davis, and outreach is underway to include Carrie Larson as well. Dr. Schiffner extended appreciation to Astrid Aveledo, Dr. Paula Akerlund, Lisa Smith, and others for their contributions.

c. Legislative Committee Report (Jim Sayce)

Jim Sayce reported that a meeting was held yesterday with Representatives Walsh and McEntire. The discussion covered CDL programming, Lake Swano, and COLA funding. He expressed appreciation to Arlen Harris and Dr. Carli Schiffner for their efforts in advocating for the needs of the College. Dr. Paula Akerlund added that it is important for such meetings to occur regularly.

d. Fiscal Liaison Report (Aliza Esty)

No report.

e. Items of Interest (Dr. Paula Akerlund)

Dr. Paula Akerlund noted that the discussion on study sessions will be tabled until the October meeting when all members are present. Astrid Aveledo reminded the Board that she will be out of town for the December 9 meeting and is uncertain about her availability for the April 14 meeting.

The meeting recessed at 2:10 PM and reconvened at 2:18 PM.

XIII. Executive Session

The Board entered a closed executive session at 2:18 PM under RCW 42.30.110 to consult with legal counsel regarding ongoing legal matters. The session was scheduled to last approximately 10 minutes. The Board reconvened in open session at 2:30 PM.

XIV. Action Items as a Result of the Executive Session

No action was taken as a result of the executive session.

XV. Good of the Order

Dr. Paula Akerlund reminded everyone that the next meeting will be held in Raymond and that the study session will focus on the College’s priorities.

XVI. Adjournment/next meeting

There being no further business, Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund adjourned the meeting at 2:33 PM. The Board of Trustees will hold its next meeting on October 14, 2025 at 1:00 PM, at Grays Harbor College in Raymond and via Zoom.

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Dr. Carli Schiffner, Secretary

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Dr. Paula Akerlund, Chair