

Grays Harbor College Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Minutes

Board Meeting: The Board meeting convened on April 8, 2025, at 10:07 AM.

Members Present: Dr. Paula Akerlund, Dr. Harry Carthum, Jim Sayce

Members Present on Zoom: Aliza Esty & Astrid Aveledo

Others Present: Derek Edens, Heidi Wood, Dr. Carli Schiffner, Ja'Shona Cooks, Lisa Smith, Erin Tofte, Dr. Aaron Coby, Julie Randall, Jason Gordon, Laurie Franklin, Ariel Finrock, Jonni Dawson, Penny James, Dr. William Dyer, Kari Hasbrouck, Art Oestreich, Cara Beth Stevenson, Jared Stratton, Nina Urioste, Anica Reimer, Sarah Dalrymple, Isaac Humiston, Dr. Andrew Gaines, David Workman, Janet M. Workman, Stevie Stevenson, Teresa Dubois, Kenji Seta, Floyd Plemmons

Others Present on Zoom: Annalee Atwell-Tobar, Barb Dyer, Berta Gibby, Cathy LeCompte, Cheyenna Carroll, Crystal Bagby, Hannah Tupper, Janet Parker, JEB Thornton, Karyn Olson, Lori Christmas, Matt Edwards, Matt Holder, Matthew Barber, Nancy DeVerse, Sarina Tung, Shelly Hoffman, Stephanie Gibson, Sydney Yager

A study session featuring an overview of the NCII Rural Guided Pathways Project by Dr. Carli Schiffner, Julie Randall, Lisa Smith, Heidi Wood, and Dr. Aaron Coby took place at 9:00 AM.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called the meeting to order at 10:07 AM. Roll call was taken by Ja'Shona 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 with the addition of two action items: Faculty Excellence Awards Approval and Bishop Trust Investment Scholarship Approval. Dr. Akerlund noted that the materials for both items were already included in the packet and only the actions needed to be added. Dr. Harry Carthum moved to approve the agenda as amended, and Jim Sayce seconded the motion. The motion carried.

VI. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

VII Celebrations

The April meeting celebrated the success of the Winter Musical: *Groundhog Day*. Dr. Carli Schiffner expressed her gratitude to Dr. William Dyer, Art Oestreich, Dr. Andrew Gaines, and to all of the cast and crew for their outstanding production. She noted the many hours of preparation involved and thanked everyone for delivering an incredible event.

Dr. Andrew Gaines thanked the Board for recognizing the musical and expressed appreciation for the entire community effort that made the production possible. He shared that it was an honor to be part of the project and to help organize such an event.

Dr. William Dyer also thanked the Board for their recognition. He emphasized the importance of audience support and expressed gratitude to those who continually support the arts, including the Board. He extended thanks to the students and to colleagues in attendance—Dr. Andrew Gaines, Art Oestreich, Kari Workman, David Workman, Janet Workman, Stevie Stevenson, and Teresa Dubois—as well as to those who were unable to attend. Dr. Dyer specifically recognized Art Oestreich for bringing the production's creative vision to life through his work on the set design.

Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund highlighted the vital importance of the arts to the community and expressed sincere thanks to everyone involved. Dr. Harry Carthum shared that *Groundhog Day* was the best play he had ever seen. He gave personal acknowledgments to several individuals involved and expressed his overall appreciation.

VIII & IX. Action Items & Standing Reports

Action Items

1. Approval of March 11, 2025 Minutes
 - a. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion to approve the March 11, 2025 meeting minutes. Jim Sayce moved to approve the minutes, and Dr. Harry Carthum seconded the motion. The motion carried.
2. First Readings of Operational Policies:
 - a. Operational Policy 306 – Ungraded Courses
 - i. There were no major changes to this policy, only updates to the associated Revised Code of Washington (RCW). This is a stand-alone policy with no accompanying procedure.
 - b. Operational Policy 307 – Grays Harbor College Library
 - i. No changes were made to this policy. Dr. Aaron Coby clarified that students actively enrolled at the College have first access to the resources, after that, the library is a community resource.
 - c. Operational Policy 318 – Reciprocity
 - i. This policy has no accompanying procedure. Dr. Aaron Coby noted that accuracy was confirmed with the Registrar's Office, which oversees implementation, and the policy applies to institutions within the state of Washington.
 - d. Operational Policy 319 – Credit for Prior Learning
 - i. This policy includes one accompanying procedure that outlines the process.

Dr. Aaron Coby illuminated that the determination of credit to be awarded is made at the departmental level through assessment and recommendation. Students may appeal decisions and are required to present evidence for reconsideration.

Safeguards to prevent misuse include maintaining clear boundaries and ensuring collaboration with faculty in the decision-making process.

- ii. Dr. Carli Schiffner added that some frameworks—such as military crosswalks—are adopted or passed through from the State Board. Credit for Prior Learning policies vary significantly across institutions in the system. Generally, subject matter experts are responsible for determining credit.
- e. Operational Policy 320 – Placement Reciprocity
 - i. This policy includes procedures that detail how placement from other institutions is recognized. Dr. Aaron Coby noted that this policy is a reiteration of the statewide Placement Reciprocity Policy adopted in 2013 by the Student Services and Instruction Commissions at the State Board.
- f. Operational Policy 321 – Credit Hour Policy
 - i. This policy determines how many credits a given course is worth, based on guidelines from the U.S. Department of Education and the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU).
 - ii. An audience member asked whether an “hour” was defined as 50 or 60 minutes in this context. Dr. Aaron Coby clarified that one academic hour is defined as 50 minutes and noted that the policy may need to be updated to reflect that definition.
- g. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion to advance the first readings of Operational Policies 306, 307, 318, 319, 320, and 321 to a second reading. Jim Sayce moved to advance the listed policies, and Dr. Harry Carthum seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- 3. Second Readings of Operational Policies:
 - a. Operational Policy 303 – Approving and Discontinuing Degree Programs
 - i. No discussion.
 - b. Operational Policy 310 – Human Subjects Research
 - i. No discussion.
 - c. Operational Policy 314 – Copyright.
 - i. No discussion.
 - d. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion to adopt Operational Policies 303, 310, and 314. Jim Sayce moved to adopt the policies, and Dr. Harry Carthum seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- 4. Faculty Excellence Awards Approval
 - a. In October, the Board approved just over \$12,000 to support faculty development, achievement, and awards, and the full approved amount was utilized this year. Dr. Aaron Coby explained that a committee was convened to determine the distribution of these funds, and the committee’s recommendations are included in the Board packet. The allocation consisted of seven Faculty Development Awards, two Faculty Achievement Awards, and two Faculty Excellence Awards.

- b. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion to approve the Faculty Excellence Awards as submitted. Dr. Harry Carthum moved to approve the awards, and Jim Sayce seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- 5. Approval of 2025-2026 Fee Schedule
 - a. Jason Gordon shared that the fee schedule is reviewed annually to identify fees that are no longer needed, those requiring revisions, and any additions related to new programs. For the 2025–2026 academic year, there were 11 new or revised fees proposed. Dr. Carli Schiffner noted that further analysis is still needed for some of the other fees to ensure they do not place an undue burden on students and will be addressed in the future.
 - b. Dr. Schiffner shared that support measures are available to assist students with fees, such as the Hughes Tools Fund. Dr. Schiffner also clarified that the fee listed for Medical Assistant Year 2 applies to the full academic year.
 - c. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund entertained a motion to approve the FY2025–2026 fee schedule as submitted. Jim Sayce moved to approve the fee schedule, and Dr. Harry Carthum seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- 6. Bishop Trust Investment Scholarship Approval
 - a. The Bishop Trust yielded an income of \$388,000. Based on the four percent distribution rule, the request is for \$225,866.10 to be allocated for scholarships for FY2026.
 - b. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund entertained a motion to approve the Bishop Trust Scholarship allocation as presented. Jim Sayce moved to approve the scholarship allocation, and Dr. Harry Carthum seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Standing Reports

1. Student Government Report (Isaac Humiston)

Dr. Carli Schiffner congratulated Isaac Humiston on earning his Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) credential. Mr. Humiston reported that Anica Reimer has been hired as the new Executive Vice President for the Associated Students of Grays Harbor College (ASGHC). ASGHC is currently working on developing its budget. Selena Guzman, Vice President for Diversity & Awareness, recently introduced Congresswoman Emily Randall for a Town Hall she hosted on campus. Lastly, eight students attended the Students of Color Conference at Green River College.

2. Classified Staff Report (Jared Stratton)

Jared Stratton reported that members of the Washington Public Employees Association (WPEA) have ratified the agreement. The agreement will now move to the Governor for consideration regarding funding. He noted that, if funded, the agreement would eliminate the need for an “evergreen year,” with implementation beginning in July. Additional updates will be provided as more information becomes available.

3. Represented Exempt Staff Report (Shelly Hoffman)

There were no updates beyond the written report.

4. Faculty report (Tom Kuester)

There were no updates beyond the written report.

5. Administrative Services Report (Jason Gordon)

Jason Gordon and Dr. Carli Schiffner provided an update on the Allocation Model Review Committee (AMRC). Mr. Gordon shared a supporting document with the Board outlining the proposed changes. Approximately two-thirds of the revisions were approved unanimously, while the remaining one-third—primarily concerning provisos and earmarks—was sent back for additional refinement. A follow-up survey focused on these remaining items has been distributed to the community and technical colleges.

The current proposal would increase the Minimum Operating Allocation (MOA) from \$2.85 million to \$3.5 million, with the remaining funds to be split 50/50 between Full-Time Enrollment (FTE) and performance metrics. Mr. Gordon noted that while the College tends to lose funding under the FTE category, it would see gains through the revised MOA structure. Final numbers should be available by late May or early June.

Mr. Gordon also provided a general budget update and reported that a third-quarter budget summary will be presented at the May meeting. He gave a brief update on the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC), which has met several times in recent weeks. Mr. Gordon also attended a recent meeting with community and technical college presidents to review both the capital allocation framework and the funding model.

At the state level, House and Senate budgets have been released, and while the budget totals are similar, they differ in approach. In response to a Board question regarding budget differences, Mr. Gordon explained that one version of the state budget applies the Office of Financial Management (OFM) error adjustment this year, while the other defers it to the following year.

Mr. Gordon reported that the College successfully completed its accountability audit, which confirmed compliance with state laws and regulations. A financial audit will follow later. Mr. Gordon thanked Sydni Yeager for her support throughout the audit process. He concluded by noting that the College currently has more revenue than expenses, but a clearer financial picture will emerge as March financials are finalized.

c. Phone Update (Derek Edens)

Derek Edens shared that Cabinet has decided to transition the main phone line to the Student Help Desk, which is now staffed by Phil Robinson and a work-study student. A designated back-up is also in place to assist when both primary staff are unavailable. The team is collaborating with Heidi Wood and the Transitions Office to ensure adequate support for Spanish-speaking callers and is working with Human Resources to finalize answering protocols. An FAQ document has been developed to address common questions, along with a contact list to help route inquiries to the appropriate departments. Implementation is scheduled for early May, and a follow-up update will be provided.

6. Human Resources Report (Erin Tofte)

Erin Tofte shared that the College has hired a new Director of Facilities, who will begin on May 19. Two custodial positions have also been filled, with both new hires scheduled to start soon. Lastly, the position for Director of Financial Aid and Scholarships has been re-posted.

7. Instruction Report (Dr. Aaron Coby)

Dr. Aaron Coby highlighted that more than 60% of the most recent nursing cohort is currently employed within Grays Harbor County. It is currently grant season, and Cathy LeCompte and Ariel Finfrock are working on the Perkins grant application to secure continued funding. One of the division's goals is to strengthen pathways for Transitions students through the Guided Pathways framework.

In response to a question regarding the potential addition of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program or other health-related offerings, Dr. Coby explained that the College's capacity is largely determined by the Washington State Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission, and while the BSN remains under consideration, it will take several years to implement.

Dr. Coby also shared that planning is underway for a new Medical Assistant (MA) program in Raymond, with a targeted start date for Fall 2025. Additionally, a new Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program is being developed for Pacific County this Summer Quarter. CNA lab spaces are being established in both Raymond and Ilwaco. Dr. Coby will also be reviewing data regarding potential pathways for RN-to-BSN program development.

8. Student Services Report (Laurie Franklin)

Laurie Franklin provided the Board with a printed update of the most recent enrollment data, noting that enrollment is increasing and currently ahead of budgeted targets. She also shared that three GHC students will be honored at and attend the All-Washington Academic Team recognition ceremony on April 24. A Financial Aid and Scholarship Workshop is scheduled for April 23 from 12:00–4:00 PM, an initiative led by Nancy Estegard. The event is being paired with the College's food grant program, and eligible students will receive burritos as part of the outreach effort. Student Life is hosting events throughout April in recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, with programming next week coordinated by Anthony McIntosh.

9. President's Report (Dr. Carli Schiffner)

Dr. Carli Schiffner reported that the College continues to work through varying information from the federal government regarding grant programs. The loss of staff at the U.S. Department of Education is creating a void that is impacting communication and processes. Regarding the state budget, Dr. Schiffner noted that the Governor held a press conference and he is not in favor of new taxes and is still holding firm on furlough days. The College is keeping an eye on a potential additional 1% cut to the community and technical colleges.

Dr. Schiffner also shared that the College currently receives funding from the state for the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) program, but there is a proposal to eliminate that funding. The

College is advocating to retain it. She also noted that Career Connect Washington may no longer be receiving funding or may be going away entirely. Additionally, funds for the Computer Science–Cybersecurity program are now being called back.

Dr. Schiffner gave a shoutout to the Facilities Operations crew for supporting back-to-back events two weeks ago, including the visit from Congresswoman Emily Randall and the Career Fair.

In response to a question about the Vice President of Learning and Student Success (VPLSS) position, Dr. Schiffner shared that, after a lot of consultation and in light of the College's size, the Vice President for Instruction and Vice President for Student Services positions are being combined into one role. The strength of the current deans and existing budget concerns also informed the decision. Dr. Schiffner emphasized that this structure makes the most sense for now, and the College can revisit the decision in a couple of years if needed. Concern was expressed about burnout for the person in the combined role and for Dr. Schiffner. She acknowledged that others have raised the same concern, but sees this as an opportunity to be more integrated and break down silos. There was appreciation expressed for the thoughtfulness and logic behind the decision, and ongoing evaluation was encouraged.

Dr. Schiffner closed by noting there will be a deeper dive coming on marketing and social media work. She encouraged the Board to look out for a new billboard in Central Park promoting the Computer Science program and the partnership with South Puget Sound Community College.

a. Accreditation (Kristy Anderson)

Kristy Anderson was out of the office today, but it was noted that she is doing a great job. The College has hired someone on a short-term contract to assist with preparations for accreditation.

b. Student Services and Instructional Building (SSIB) (Floyd Plemmons)

Floyd Plemmons reported that we're down to our last few projects. The artwork coordinated through the State has been created, painted, crated, and is now awaiting shipment; the installation is scheduled for May. Work is currently underway to enhance emergency response communication. In May, work will also take place in the kitchen to support the Culinary Arts program. With spring break happening this week, many folx are on campus working on several projects.

Floyd also shared that there is money available for capital projects, and work will begin in the next two to three months. Most notably, this will include replacing storm, water, and sewer lines as part of a larger effort to upgrade the College's infrastructure. In response to a question about the concrete work, Floyd said that it will now be done in the summer.

Floyd also shared that an herb garden will be going in, and Nina Urioste came forward to share more information. The idea is to provide students with fresh ingredients and to keep the garden small. The project is called C.H.E.F., and it's also meant to address food waste and how to convert it into food growth. The project has strong support from Student Life, TRIO, and the Food Pantry. It will launch on April 17 at 12:30 p.m., and everyone is invited to help break ground.

10. Board Report

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

Lisa Smith shared that the Bishop Trust Investment Scholarship will open on May 1, and the Foundation helps to distribute the funds. The scholarship is not just for Grays Harbor College students, but for students across Grays Harbor County.

The economy and recent stock market fluctuations have significantly impacted the Foundation's investments. The Foundation will be watching these changes closely as it works on finalizing its budget.

b. Board Art Committee Update (Astrid Aveledo)

There were no updates at this time. Final signage still needs to be completed for one of the pieces on the first floor.

c. Legislative Committee Update (Jim Sayce)

Jim Sayce shared that his schedule currently conflicts with the meeting time. The priority moving forward will be to create a summer schedule to meet with legislators in Grays Harbor.

d. Items of Interest (Dr. Paula Akerlund)

Dr. Paula Akerlund led a discussion on upcoming Board meeting logistics. The meetings will remain on the second Tuesday of the month, but there was some discussion about possibly adjusting the timing of meetings. The decision was made to begin the Study Session at 12:00 PM, with the regular Board meeting starting at 1:00 PM. The meeting room will be open at 11:30 AM for optional social time and lunch. The November meeting date will shift to November 18, as the originally scheduled date falls on Veterans Day. Dr. Carli Schiffner, Ja'Shona Cooks, and Dr. Paula Akerlund will send potential dates to the Board to schedule a retreat in late July.

XIII. Executive Session

There was no Executive Session.

XIV. Action Items as a Result of the Executive Session

There were no action items as a result of the Executive Session.

XV. Good of the Order

Jim Sayce shared that a large cell tower in South Bend blew down. There are now four to five mobile cell towers in place, which may remain for six months to two years. He noted that he currently does not have cell service, so he will be hard to reach by phone. He also mentioned that funding previously allocated for an evacuation center has been removed, as well as funding for another local project. An appeal is underway. He added that this situation reinforces the importance of being conservative with spending.

Penny James shared her appreciation for the College's nursing program, praising the personal care she has received. She also encouraged adding a geriatric focus to the program.



Dr. Carli Schiffner thanked the team for their support and flexibility, which allowed her to truly unplug while on vacation.

XVI. Adjournment/next meeting

There being no further business, Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund adjourned the meeting at 12:01 PM. The Board of Trustees will hold its next meeting on May 13, 2025 at 10:00 AM, at Grays Harbor College at the Columbia Education Center in Ilwaco and via Zoom.

Dr. Carli Schiffner, Secretary

Dr. Paula Akerlund, Chair