



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 November 18, 2025, at 1:09 PM.

Members Present: Dr. Paula Akerlund, Aliza Esty, Jim Sayce, Astrid Aveledo, Dr. Harry Carthum

Others Present: Holly Bringman, Ja'Shona Cooks, Derek Edens, Dr. Carli Schiffner, Jason Gordon, Matthew Barber, Lisa Smith, Cathy LeCompte, Kristy Anderson, Erin Tofte, Jennifer Johnson, Annalee Atwell-Tobar, Ariel Finrock, Heidi Wood, Cassaundra Smith, Lori Christmas, Sarah Dalrymple, Holly Duffy, Jody Pope, Annette Orona, Isaac Humiston, Lisa Getty, Virgil Matthews, Amanda Newbold, Karyn Olson, Lizbeth Sánchez, Leslie Coffman, Amy Anderson, Anna Olson, Megan Harper, Hannah Mechler, Sam Rayment, Clara Gillies, Savannah Thompson, Madelyn Roy, Justine Coordt, Josephine Dally

Others Present on Zoom: Dr. Aaron Coby, Ashley Bowie-Gallegos, Ava Garcia, Carla Idohl-Corwin, Camryn Scheuber, Kenji Seta, Jared Stratton, JEB Thornton, Jonni Dawson, Julie Randall, Matt Holder, Jonni Dawson

A study session featuring an Early Childhood Education Program Overview and Facility Tour by Hannah Mechler, Cathy LeCompte, Megan Harper, Anna Olson, and Amy Anderson began at 11:30 AM.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called the meeting to order at 1:09 PM. 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. Jim Sayce moved to approve the agenda, and Aliza Esty seconded the motion. The motion carried.

VI. Public Comments

No public comments.

VII. Celebration

Holly Bringman invited Jody Pope, Director of Athletics; Virgil Matthews, Men's Basketball Coach; and Annette Orona, Athletic First Responder, to share about the Youth Skills Camps.

The Athletic Department recently hosted Youth Skills Camps for baseball, softball, and basketball. The camps were well attended by youth in the community. Athletic Director, Jody Pope, expressed appreciation to the coaches, Athletics staff, and student-athletes for their efforts in running the camps; to Information Technology for supporting the registration process; and to the Business Office for assisting with financial coordination.

Pope noted that the camps brought new families to campus and helped build trust within the community, emphasizing the importance of cultivating these relationships to support future student-athletes. She also shared positive feedback from families regarding the success and impact of the camps. The Board expressed appreciation for Pope's leadership.

VIII. New Employee Introductions

Erin Tofte introduced new employees: Jennifer Johnson has joined the College as a Human Resources Consultant Assistant 2, Virgil Matthews recently started in the role of Financial Aid Outreach Specialist, Justine Coordt and Josephine Dally have both joined the Financial Aid team as Financial Aid Program Specialists, Madeline Roy has joined as a Resource Navigator, and Lizbeth Sanchez is now serving as a Program Assistant in the Transitions Department.

IX & X. Action Items & Standing Reports

Action Items

1. Approval of October 14, 2025 Minutes
 - a. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion to approve the October 14, 2025 meeting minutes. Jim Sayce moved to approve the minutes, and Aliza Esty seconded the motion. The motion carried.
2. First Reading of Operational Policy 403 - Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
 - a. Holly Bringman noted that only minor grammatical updates were made and that there were no substantive changes.
 - b. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion to approve the first reading of Operational Policy 403 - Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Jim Sayce moved to approve the first reading, and Aliza Esty seconded. The motion carried.
3. First Reading of Operational Policy 501 - Business Functions, Delegation of Authority
 - a. Jason Gordon noted that no major changes were made and that the policy is in accordance with state requirements.
 - b. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion to approve the first reading of Operational Policy 501 - Business Functions, Delegation of Authority. Jim Sayce moved to approve the first reading, and Aliza Esty seconded. The motion carried.
4. Approval of the Memorandum of Understanding between Grays Harbor College and the Grays Harbor College Federation of Teachers (Local 4984)
 - a. Erin Tofte explained that the Memorandum of Understanding extends the current contract for one additional year. The College will open and bargain the Stafford Creek Corrections Center portion this spring, and negotiations for the remainder of the contract will begin in Fall 2026.
 - b. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between Grays Harbor College and the Grays Harbor College Federation of

Teachers (Local 4984). Dr. Harry Carthum moved to approve, and Aliza Esty seconded. The motion carried.

Standing Reports

1. Student Government Report (Isaac Humiston)

Isaac Humiston reported that there are currently at least five active student clubs. The Associated Student Government (ASG) recently approved the formation of *GHC Rocks*, a new recovery focused club. Hiring has been completed for Marco Cerqueira, who will serve as the Associate Director of Student Life, Equity, and Inclusion, and Angel Galeana will begin on December 1 as the Student Life Coordinator.

ASG has distributed 100 holiday baskets so far and anticipates distributing approximately 160 more. Each basket includes all items needed for a full meal. Due to malfunctioning freezer units, special thanks were extended to Chef Nina Urioste and Campus Operations staff for assisting with storing and moving the turkeys. Following this effort, ASG will transition to distributing winter holiday baskets. ASG expressed appreciation to all donors supporting the Harbor Landing Food Pantry, including the Foundation, for contributions made during the government shutdown.

The Student Voices Council at Stafford Creek Corrections Center requested additional advising support, and Sarah Dalrymple is assisting until Marco Cerqueira begins his role.

2. Classified Staff Report (Jared Stratton)

Jared Stratton reported that the Washington Public Employees Association (WPEA) is currently in a holding pattern with the Legislature regarding addendum funding for the new year.

3. Represented Exempt Staff Report (Shelly Hoffman)

There were no updates beyond the written report.

4. Faculty report (Shiloh Winsor & Tom Kuester)

There were no updates beyond the written report.

5. Administrative Services Report (Jason Gordon)

Jason Gordon presented the First Quarter budget report, which can be found in the Board of Trustees packet. Highlights from his report included that tuition-bearing FTE was slightly above projections, and expenses are trending slightly below anticipated levels. He noted that the six-month (Quarter 2) budget report will provide a clearer picture of overall spending trends. Gordon reported that state allocation increased by \$180,034 in Quarter 1 and shared that Running Start revenue appears low at this point because Fall billing has not yet been processed.

Gordon also highlighted that the Bookstore's expenses do not yet reflect the billing for the Centralia College contract, and he added that Bishop Center revenues are expected to increase as more performances occur throughout the academic year.

Regarding the designated cash reserves, he noted that the additional \$297,052 approved at year-end brought the Board of Trustees Reserve to 11.6 percent. Gordon will bring forward additional information on reserve policies at comparative institutions of higher education. He also reported

that the new state allocation model remains scheduled to go into effect next year and will be phased in over six years in equal increments.

Gordon concluded by stating that FY27 budget development is underway, meetings with budget managers were held last week, and budget requests are due at the end of December.

6. Human Resources Report (Erin Tofte)

Erin Tofte highlighted the new employee badge system that is currently being distributed. The updated badges combine a photo identification with card-reader access for building entry. She expressed appreciation to Derek Edens and his team, as well as Campus Operations, for their support in implementing the new system.

Tofte shared that the College held an employee benefits and wellness fair last week and thanked Kalina Ebling for her work in organizing the event. She also noted that many of the positions listed as active searches in the written report have now closed and filled. The Director of Advising/Rural Projects position was a failed search and will be reworked and reposted soon.

7. Learning & Student Success Report (Holly Bringman)

Holly Bringman provided an enrollment update and reported strong early momentum for Winter Quarter registration. Enrollment is currently at approximately 751 students, which is 108 students higher than this time last year and includes Running Start and Stafford Creek Corrections Center (SCCC) enrollments. Bringman added that the College has reached 49 percent of its state funding goal for Winter Quarter.

Bringman expressed appreciation to staff at SCCC and at the Aberdeen Campus for hosting an Advising Day in October at SCCC, noting positive feedback from both students and staff. Advisors and staff were able to meet individually with most students to support Winter Quarter planning. Bringman then introduced Dean Heidi Wood and Interim Associate Dean at SCCC, Leslie Coffman, to share additional updates.

Leslie Coffman provided background on Stafford Creek Corrections Center, noting that it is a medium-security facility that opened in 2000. She reported that the increase in Fall enrollment reflects a more holistic approach to advising and support, as well as the addition of evening course offerings. SCCC has also expanded academic-related programming, including a recent writing workshop facilitated by Washington State Poet Laureate Derek Sheffield, which received highly positive feedback from students. Coffman emphasized that students value the education provided by Grays Harbor College and are experiencing positive changes aligned with the “Washington Way,” which emphasizes student-focused practices within corrections education. Coffman also explained how student success is measured within the corrections environment—based on release dates, educational need, and continued academic progress.

Dean Heidi Wood provided an update on the partnership with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). She shared that Green Hill School experienced a significant surge earlier in the year, which led to overcrowding. The State developed a coordinated plan to address the issue, and part of that plan included establishing the Harbor Heights unit at SCCC to serve young men between the ages of 18 and 25. The facility is currently housing 22 individuals, many of whom already have some college coursework completed.

Wood noted that GHC will begin offering classes at Harbor Heights during Winter Quarter, starting with Introduction to Business, based on strong student interest in the AAS in Business program. She added that the College is collaborating with DCYF leadership to develop an annual academic schedule moving forward.

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

Dr. Carli Schiffner reported that the College participated in the second NCII Rural Guided Pathways Institute, held in Kentucky at the end of October. The focus of the institute was on workforce alignment, including evaluating College programs to ensure they lead to living wage jobs.

She shared that the Washington Association of Community and Technical Colleges (WACTC) presidents recently met to discuss statewide needs, including Centers of Excellence and the upcoming legislative session. There is significant encouragement for trustees to engage in advocacy in Olympia during February and March. Dr. Schiffner also noted that the new state allocation formula was recently featured in *The Seattle Times*, particularly around the concept of "giver colleges," which has raised concern across the system.

Dr. Schiffner highlighted the Fall Art Gala, which was highly successful. She expressed appreciation to Hailey McGraw and the volunteers for coordinating the event, as well as to the Culinary Arts Program for providing catering. Last Friday, Washington State Poet Laureate Derek Sheffield visited campus. His visit included a poetry workshop at Stafford Creek Corrections Center, a session with students at the Harbor Learning Center, and an evening poetry reading on campus. This Friday will feature an artist talk with Carrie Larson and Earl Davis, along with a campus art studio tour.

Dr. Schiffner noted that the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) met at Grays Harbor College on November 5. The meeting included a deep dive into the region's community health landscape, with participation from community partners, Foundation Board members, and College faculty and staff. Dr. Schiffner concluded by noting several upcoming events, including the Grays Harbor Symphony and String Ensemble performance on Sunday, additional Bishop Center events through the end of Fall Quarter, and the campus Holiday Celebration on December 8.

a. Accreditation (Kristy Anderson)

It was reported that work is underway on the Year 7 Report and that the dates for the Year 7 accreditation visit in October have been confirmed.

9. Board Reports

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

Lisa Smith reported that the Bishop Center Campaign is currently at \$41,000, which will help the Bishop Center's financial health for this year. She shared that the Foundation is launching the annual *The Journey* campaign, with the digital version going out this week and mailed materials scheduled for release next week. Smith noted that the College recently received an additional \$12,000 in funding to support the Harbor Landing Food Pantry. She also reported that the Foundation has released \$22,000 to support the painting of the GHC Education Center in Ilwaco.

b. Legislative Committee Report (Jim Sayce)

Jim Sayce reported that plans are underway for the College to be in Olympia during the upcoming legislative session.

c. Fiscal Liaison Report (Aliza Esty)

Aliza Esty met with Jason Gordon to discuss the first quarter budget report. They also discussed the possibility of gradually increasing the Board Reserve above the current 11.6 percent and comparing GHC's reserve level to those of peer colleges. Gordon will continue looking into this option.

d. Items of Interest (Dr. Paula Akerlund)

Dr. Paula Akerlund shared that the trustee account currently has a balance of \$7,275.43. She noted that the Board of Trustees typically donates \$1,000 each to the Bishop Center, the College Foundation, and to the Athletics Department, and they plan to continue this practice again this year. She added that the Board of Trustees may also set aside a portion of the funds to support students, faculty, and staff as needs arise.

Dr. Harry Carthum requested an updated organizational chart. He also expressed interest in hearing from faculty at a future meeting. Dr. Schiffner will follow up on both requests.

The meeting recessed at 2:52 PM and reconvened at 2:57 PM.

XIII. Executive Session

The Board entered a closed executive session at 2:57 PM under RCW 42.30.110 to consult with legal counsel regarding ongoing legal matters and pending litigation. The session was scheduled to last approximately 15 minutes. The Board reconvened in open session at 3:13 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. Harry Carthum complimented the College's written publications and marketing materials, noting that they are beautifully done. He also expressed appreciation for the earlier report from Jody Pope and highlighted the positive social media posts shared by the Athletics Department.

Astrid Aveledo reflected on the leadership and community effort that went into ensuring the new building features significant local pride and artist representation. She encouraged everyone to attend this Friday's event with artists Earl Davis and Carrie Larson.

Dr. Paula Akerlund shared that the visit from the Washington State Poet Laureate was excellent. She also reported that she attended the Association of College Trustees (ACT) Fall Conference and participated on a panel focused on tenure with Dr. Schiffner. She expressed appreciation to the Board of Trustees for establishing the tenure process at the College.

XVI. Adjournment/next meeting

There being no further business, Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund adjourned the meeting at 3:19 PM. The Board of Trustees will hold its next meeting on December 9, 2025 at 1:00 PM, at Grays Harbor College in Aberdeen

November 18, 2025
Grays Harbor College Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting Minutes



and via Zoom.

Dr. Carli Schiffner, Secretary

Dr. Paula Akerlund, Chair