



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 October 14, 2025, at 1:04 PM.

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

Members on Zoom: Astrid Aveledo

Others Present: Holly Bringman, Ja'Shona Cooks, Derek Edens, Dr. Carli Schiffner, Jason Gordon, Matthew Barber, Lisa Smith, Cathy LeCompte, Kristy Anderson, Matt Edwards, Erin Tofte, Floyd Plemmons

Others Present on Zoom: Ariel Finrock, Jax Bonifer, Dr. Marco Cerqueira, Shelly Hoffman, Dr. Aaron Coby, Julie Randall, Heidi Wood, Hannah Tupper, Cassaundra Smith, Lori Christmas, Lisa Getty, Jozette James, Carla Idohl-Corwin, Ava Garcia, Phil Petheram, Matt Holder, Sarina Tung, Sarah Dalrymple, JEB Thornton, Cheyenna Carroll, PJ Moore, Jackie Blumberg, Penny James, Jeremy Winn, Kenji Seta

A study session focusing on a College Priorities overview presented by Matt Edwards began at 12:00 PM.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called the meeting to order at 1:04 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. Dr. Harry Carthum moved to approve the agenda, and Aliza Esty seconded the motion. The motion carried.

VI. Public Comments

No public comments.

VII. Celebration

Holly Bringman recognized the Enrollment Response Team and expressed appreciation to individuals and departments across the College for their tremendous contributions toward increasing fall enrollment. She thanked Deanna Shedley and the Business Office staff, Lisa Smith and the Foundation, instructional deans

Heidi Wood, Dr. Aaron Coby, Carol O'Neal, and Cathy LeCompte, as well as Lori Christmas with Running Start and Matt Edwards.

Bringman also recognized the dedicated efforts of staff in Student Services, including Shelly Hoffman and Jenny Crawford in Outreach; Ava Garcia, Jozette James, Maricelda Villa-Miranda, Jonathan Salvador, and Koda Bell in Enrollment; Hannah Tupper, Stephanie Thornton, Jax Bonifer, Jared Stratton, and Jacci Ryker in Advising and Testing; and Stephanie Gibson, Gordon Williams, Jordan Wolfe, Clara Gillies, Karyn Olson, Elisa Harvey, Joie Dally, Savannah Thompson, Crystal Bagby, and the Student Funding team. Additional appreciation was extended to the TRIO team, particularly Michael Lick and Lisbeth Sanchez; Sarah Dalrymple and the Student Life staff; and Phil Robinson and Annalee Atwell-Tobar for their support in assisting students by phone. She also gave thanks to Julie Randall, Ariel Finrock, and JEB Thornton for their contributions.

VIII. New Employee Introductions

Erin Tofte introduced new employees. Dr. Marco Cerqueira will be joining the College as the Associate Director of Student Life for Equity, Inclusion, and Engagement. He shared a bit about his background and mentioned that he is happy to be returning to Washington State. Carla Idohl-Corwin has joined the College as the Associate Dean of Financial Aid and Workforce Funding and has been in the role for about a month. She is a 1986 Grays Harbor College alumna and brings over 35 years of experience in financial aid.

IX & X. Action Items & Standing Reports

Action Items

1. Approval of September 9, 2025 Minutes
 - a. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion to approve the September 9, 2025, meeting minutes. Jim Sayce moved to approve the minutes, and Aliza Esty seconded the motion. The motion carried.
2. Exceptional Faculty Award
 - a. As of September 30, the balance of the Exceptional Faculty Fund was \$338,954. In accordance with Administrative Procedure 501.03, a request was made to allocate 4 percent of the fund balance for the 2025–26 academic year in the amount of \$13,558.
 - b. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion to approve \$13,558 for the 2025–26 Exceptional Faculty Award. Dr. Harry Carthum moved to approve the motion, and Jim Sayce seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Standing Reports

1. Student Government Report (Isaac Humiston)

Lisa Getty, Executive Vice President, provided the Associated Student Government (ASG) report. She shared that the following ASG Senators have been added: Katelyn Pryor for Career and Technical Education (CTE), Ahwaxtin Hall for Native Pathways, and Austin Winkle for Student Veterans. Getty also noted additional updates included in the ASG written report.

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.

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

There were no updates beyond the written report.

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

Jason Gordon reported that the financial audit has concluded and that there were no findings. One area for improvement was identified related to tracking related party transactions, which had also been noted in last year's audit. Work is already underway to address this recommendation. He also expressed appreciation to Sydni Yeager and the Business Office team for their efforts during this busy period. Appreciation was extended to Gordon and his team for their thorough work on the audit report.

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

Erin Tofte highlighted the recent Workplace Culture training, which was held with faculty last week. She shared that over the summer, Cabinet focused on how to define workplace culture for the College and has since been engaging staff to identify potential barriers and gather feedback. A report on this work will be provided to the Board in the spring. Tofte also announced that Hailey McGraw is no longer serving in an interim capacity and has transitioned into the full-time role as the Director of Library Services.

7. **Learning & Student Success Report** (Holly Bringman)

Holly Bringman called attention to the enrollment snapshot as of September 30, which reflects continued growth. She also noted that several outreach events are taking place and are listed in the written report. Heidi Wood explained that Stafford Creek enrollment increased this year due to earlier registration and the addition of three evening classes. In response to a question about Running Start's headcount, Lori Christmas reported that, as of today, there are 535 students enrolled.

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

Dr. Carli Schiffner welcomed Matt Barber, the College's new Assistant Attorney General, who shared a brief background about himself and expressed that he is looking forward to working with the College. Dr. Schiffner also thanked Holly Bringman for organizing the Enrollment Response Team and for her leadership.

She extended appreciation to those who participated in Kick-Off Week and thanked the Leadership Team for their efforts in launching the event. She noted that the College is reviewing participant feedback to help plan for next year and expressed appreciation to Campus Operations and Grounds for preparing the campus for the start of Fall Quarter.

Dr. Schiffner reported that the State Board will meet tomorrow in Olympia to consider the updated recommendation from the Allocation Model Review Committee (AMRC) regarding the implementation timeline. The new allocation model, which begins in July 2026, is recommended for a six-year implementation period. It is based on headcount and enrollment using a rolling four-year average, emphasizing the continued importance of enrollment. She also shared that the upcoming

legislative session is approaching, and based on the most recent economic forecast, the State Board is requesting to maintain status quo funding and to fully fund cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs).

Dr. Schiffner announced that Community Education courses are now live and highlighted *Art-Fall Fridays*, a month-long series celebrating the arts every Friday in November:

- Fall Gala Opening Reception – November 7, 6:00 PM, Spellman Art Gallery, John Spellman Library
- An Evening with Derek Sheffield, Washington State Poet Laureate – November 14, 6:00 PM, A.J. Hillier Event Center, tulalW Student Center (Room 3342)
- Art Talk with Carrie Larson and Earl Davis, plus Studio Tour featuring Student Art – November 21, 4:30 PM, A.J. Hillier Event Center, tulalW Student Center (Room 3342)

She thanked the Foundation for its support of these events and expressed excitement for closing out the work of the SSIB Art Committee.

Dr. Schiffner also noted that the College continues to monitor potential impacts of a government shutdown, maintaining close communication with union leadership and preparing contingency plans as needed.

During discussion, Trustees expressed appreciation for the College's emphasis on the arts and recognized the upcoming visit of Washington State Poet Laureate Derek Sheffield. Dr. Schiffner added that Sheffield will also host a poetry workshop at Stafford Creek on November 14.

a. **Accreditation** (Kristy Anderson)

There were no updates beyond the written report.

9. Board Reports

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

Dr. Paula Akerlund attended the most recent Foundation meeting to assist with strategic planning. The group focused on developing “headlines for the future” of the College, envisioning what success will look like, and how the Board of Trustees can continue partnering with the Foundation to achieve those goals. Appreciation was expressed to Lisa Smith for her leadership within the Foundation in advancing several significant initiatives. The Board looks forward to reviewing the Foundation's finalized strategic plan.

b. Board Art Committee Report (Astrid Aveledo)

Astrid Aveledo shared that the upcoming Art Talk with Carrie Larson and Earl Davis will serve as the final event to close out the project. She noted that the signage work is being taken care of, and that the committee is close to concluding its efforts.

c. Legislative Committee Report (Jim Sayce)

Jim Sayce reported that he and Dr. Carli Schiffner met with Representatives Jim Walsh and Joel McEntire to discuss maintaining status quo funding. He noted that the next economic forecast will be released in approximately one month and also provided an update on local economic developments.

d. Fiscal Liaison Report (Aliza Esty)

Aliza Esty met with Jason Gordon to discuss the audit report and the topic of related party transactions, noting that additional clarity and continued discussion will be important. They also discussed the budget presentation, and Board members were encouraged to relay any questions or feedback to her for follow up with Gordon. Their meeting concluded with a discussion regarding the potential financial impacts of a government shutdown.

e. Items of Interest (Dr. Paula Akerlund)

Dr. Paula Akerlund asked Board members to send any additions or modifications for future study sessions to her directly. She shared that the November study session will include a Quarter 1 budget report and an early childhood education program review, and noted that the meeting will be extended by 30 minutes to accommodate these discussions.

Astrid Aveledo referenced statistics on incarcerated youth and their needs, noting that the topic felt relevant to the College's work with the incoming Harbor Heights facility at Stafford Creek Corrections Center (SCCC). She suggested exploring the issue further to understand how it connects to the College's support for younger students and their developmental needs. Dr. Schiffner responded that she can provide an update at the next meeting on the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) partnership with SCCC, as well as broader Department of Corrections (DOC) changes occurring at the state level.

Dr. Harry Carthum suggested inviting someone to provide an update on K-12 education and current challenges. He noted that more high school students are graduating with college degrees, and that the reduction of early childhood education programs and other pressures are also affecting the pipeline. Dr. Schiffner proposed including a deeper discussion on universal pre-kindergarten models, such as the one implemented in New Mexico, in a future study session.

XIII. Executive Session

The Board entered a closed executive session at 1:57 PM under RCW 42.30.110 to consult with legal counsel regarding ongoing legal matters. The session was scheduled to last approximately 20 minutes. The Board reconvened in open session at 2:19 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

Jim Sayce reflected on an emotional moment while reading the Land Acknowledgment at last month's meeting.

XVI. Adjournment/next meeting

There being no further business, Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund adjourned the meeting at 2:21 PM. The Board of Trustees will hold its next meeting on November 18, 2025 at 1:00 PM, at Grays Harbor College in Aberdeen and via Zoom.

Dr. Carli Schiffner, Secretary

Dr. Paula Akerlund, Chair