



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 January 13, 2026, at 1:26 PM.

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

Members Present on Zoom: Aliza Esty

Others Present: Lisa Smith, Holly Bringman, Ja'Shonae Cooks, Derek Edens, Dr. Carli Schiffner, Jason Gordon, Kristy Anderson, Cassaundra Hogarty, Lori Christmas, Holly Duffy, Ginelle Hanaway, Nate Humphrey, Dr. Aaron Coby, Haley McGraw, Jeremy Winn, Cheyenna Carroll, John Jané, Terry Thompson, Javier Gallegos, Travis Obias, Yari Rolfe-Maloney, David Minkler, Brian Mahoney, Sarah Dalrymple, Sam Rayment, Lisa Getty, Isaac Humiston, Sonja McGraw, Floyd Plemmons, Michelle Smith, Matthew Barber, Erin Tofte, Anita Plagge

Others Present on Zoom: Adam Pratt, Alana Bertot, Angela Drake, Annalee Atwell-Tobar, Barbara Dyer, Brandon Curington, Carla Idohl-Corwin, Cathy LeCompte, Deanna Shedley, Dr. Marco Cerqueira, Elisa Harvey, Gordon Williams, Jackie Blumberg, JEB Thornton, Jody Pope, Jonni Dawson, Julie Randall, Kenji Seta, Lizbeth Sánchez, Matilde Brendant, Matt Holder, Dr. Michael Brown, Penny James, PJ Moore, Shelly Hoffman, Sydney Yager, William Smith

A study session featuring an AI discussion presented by Dr. Michael Brown from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, along with Dr. Aaron Coby, Haley McGraw, and Jeremy Winn from Grays Harbor College was held at 12:00 PM.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called the meeting to order at 1:26 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. Dr. Harry Carthum moved to approve the agenda, and Jim Sayce seconded the motion. The motion carried.

VI. Public Comments

No public comments.

VII. Celebration

Holly Bringman recognized Elisa Harvey and the Giving Tree initiative. The Student Funding team collaborated to provide support to Grays Harbor College students around the holidays, serving 36 families and 106 children. Students were able to receive gifts for their children, and the Student Funding team also hosted a gift wrapping event in partnership with several student clubs. Elisa Harvey thanked everyone who assisted in supporting students and their families, and the Board expressed its appreciation for the effort.

Jason Gordon recognized the Campus Operations team for their efforts over the past month to ensure campus safety and functionality, particularly during the recent storm. John Jané, Terry Thompson, Javier Gallegos, Travis Obias, Yari Rolfe-Maloney, David Minkler, and Brian Mahoney of the Campus Operations team introduced themselves to the Board, and were thanked by the Board for their work.

VIII. New Employee Introductions

Erin Tofte introduced new employees, including Taylor Friebauer, TRIO Education and Student Success Specialist for Upward Bound; Jacob Borden, Women's Soccer Coach; Michelle Smith, Library and Archives Para I; and Sonja McGraw, Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Learning and Student Success.

Changes to employment were also shared, including new positions for Cheyenna Carroll as Events Manager for the Bishop Center; Cassandra Hogarty as CTE Coordinator; Ginelle Hanaway as Interim Director for TRIO SSS; and JEB Thornton as Interim Dean of Student Services.

IX. Review Items

X & XI. Action Items & Standing Reports

Action Items

1. Approval of December 9, 2025 Minutes
 - a. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion to approve the December 9, 2025 meeting minutes. Jim Sayce moved to approve the minutes, and Dr. Harry Carthum seconded the motion. The motion carried.
2. Second Reading of Operational Policy 503 - Financial Management
 - a. Discussion occurred regarding the final sentence and the use of the term "Philosophy." It was agreed to retain the language as written.
 - b. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion to approve Operational Policy 503 - Financial Management. Jim Sayce moved to approve the policy, and Astrid Aveledo seconded. The motion carried.
3. Second Reading of Operational Policy 504 - Cash Control
 - a. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion to approve Operational Policy 504 - Cash Control. Dr. Harry Carthum moved to approve the policy, and Astrid Aveledo seconded. The motion carried.

Standing Reports

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

Isaac Humiston reported that Student Life is fully staffed and preparing to ramp up student activities. Upcoming events include nature walks and a night at the YMCA. Dr. Marco Cerqueira will host MLK dialogue sessions and is planning with students for Black History Month and Women's History Month programming. Isaac also shared that the Services and Activities (S&A) and Technology Fee budget process has begun, with requests being accepted through February 13. The goal is to present the budget to the Board at the April meeting.

2. **Classified Staff Report (To Be Determined)**

A replacement shop steward is pending.

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

Shelly Hoffman shared that she will continue serving in this role for the coming year.

4. **Faculty report (Anita Plagge)**

Anita Plagge reported that the faculty union met the prior day. The Stafford Creek Correction Center portion of the collective bargaining agreement will be negotiated this year, and a memorandum of understanding was signed to negotiate the rest of the contract next year.

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

Jason Gordon provided an update on Lake Swano. Biweekly meetings are being scheduled, and work is underway on-site data collection, permitting, and development of a public outreach plan. The goal is to complete this work by May in order to submit a capital budget request to the State Board.

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

Erin Tofte shared that there were no updates beyond the written report.

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

Holly Bringman provided an enrollment update, reporting a total enrollment of 1,539 students across state funded and Running Start programs. Running Start full time equivalent enrollment is up approximately 8.7 percent, and state funded enrollment is up approximately 3.7 percent.

Recognition was given to the Financial Aid team. The average timeline from application to award notification is currently three to four weeks, with efforts underway to continue reducing that timeframe. During the 2024-2025 academic year, just over 10 million dollars in financial aid was distributed to students.

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

Dr. Carli Schiffner reported that work is underway to schedule legislative visits in Olympia. She shared that Cheyenna Carroll has joined the College as the Events Manager and expressed appreciation for Jonni Dawson's prior work supporting the Bishop Center. Dr. Schiffner also shared that All College Day is scheduled for Friday, February 6.

Discussion also occurred regarding legislative support for community and technical colleges. It was clarified that certain grant funding is administered at the system level and not awarded directly to individual colleges.

a. **Accreditation** (Kristy Anderson)

Kristy Anderson shared that the College was notified that the request to accredit the two year Associate of Applied Science degree in Culinary Arts was approved, and the College may now begin advertising the degree program, not just the certificate. She also shared that an NWCCU meeting is scheduled for the end of January, during which the College's Year Six report will be reviewed to determine whether follow up will be needed in the Year Seven report. Kristy Anderson further shared that a decision regarding the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science will be made at the same NWCCU meeting. If approved, the College may begin advertising for a Fall 2027 launch. Students may begin in the two year program in the interim.

9. **Board Reports**

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

Astrid Aveledo shared that the Foundation Board has been working on its strategic plan. Lisa Smith facilitated an exercise focused on the Board's priorities for the Foundation's investments and its direction over the next ten years. Lisa also shared that the Foundation sold land located behind the College that it had held since 2016, with proceeds to support the institution. Additionally, the Foundation is midway through the annual *Journey Campaign*, which provides funding in support of the College's initiatives.

b. Legislative Committee Report (Jim Sayce)

Jim Sayce reported that the committee met the prior day. Topics discussed included the Governor's cuts-only budget, updates on House Bill 2121, the legislative send-off, and meetings with district constituents. The committee also discussed potential changes to Running Start and workforce development efforts. Work is underway to schedule visits in Olympia with elected officials on February 12 and 18 with students, Dr. Carli Schiffner, and Jim Sayce.

c. Fiscal Liaison Report (Aliza Esty)

Aliza Esty reported that work is underway on the presentation for the upcoming budget review scheduled to take place in February.

d. Items of Interest (Dr. Paula Akerlund)

Dr. Harry Carthum suggested exploring opportunities related to the College's medical programs, including a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and occupational therapy and physical therapy assistant programs, as well as considering offering both day and evening class options.

Astrid Aveledo spoke about the impact of inheritance and the opportunity education can provide students with agency to change their lives.

Jim Sayce shared comments on artificial intelligence, noting that it is not a substitute for creativity and discussing its future role. Aliza Esty expressed interest in seeing a plan related to artificial intelligence, and Astrid Aveledo added comments regarding the importance of critical thinking skills and the need to continue nurturing them.

Dr. Paula Akerlund asked Board members to review the proposed meeting schedule for approval at the next meeting and noted the proposed Board Retreat scheduled for Thursday, July 16.

The meeting recessed at 2:35 PM and reconvened at 2:40 PM.

XIV. Executive Session

The Board entered a closed executive session at 2:40 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 2:55 PM.

XV. Action Items as a Result of the Executive Session

Dr. Carli Schiffner recommended that the Board approve the settlement agreement between Grays Harbor College, the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services, and KMB Architects as presented. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion to approve the settlement agreement between Grays Harbor College, the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services, and KMB Architects. Astrid Aveledo moved to approve the agreement, and Aliza Esty seconded the motion. The motion carried.

XVI. Good of the Order

President Schiffner acknowledged Jim Sayce and Dr. Harry Carthum in recognition of their birthdays this month. Jim Sayce shared that he will be retired by the next time the Board meets, following 40 years of service.

XVII. Adjournment/next meeting

There being no further business, Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund adjourned the meeting at 3:00 PM. The Board of Trustees will hold its next meeting on February 10, 2026 at 1:00 PM, at Grays Harbor College in Aberdeen and via Zoom.

Dr. Carli Schiffner, Secretary

Dr. Paula Akerlund, Chair