



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 June 9, 2026, at 1:04 PM.

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

Others Present:

Ja'Shona Cooks, Derek Edens, Dr. Carli Schiffner, Holly Bringman, Jason Gordon, Kristy Anderson, Ginelle Hanaway, Lisa Smith, Jonni Dawson, Cassandra Hogarty, Lori Christmas, Matthew Barber, Isaac Humiston, Lisa Getty, Holly Duffy, Jacob Borden, Penny James, Terri Bell, JEB Thornton, Nate Kissler, Anthony Wolfe, Annalee Atwell-Tobar, Lizbeth Sanchez, Marisela Martinez, Amy Twigg, Jonathon Salvador, Molly Zinkle, Aiden Vicario, Sarina Tung, Marco Cerqueira, Sydni Yager

Others Present on Zoom:

Dr. Aaron Coby, Alana Bertot, Alexis Palmer, Ariel Finrock, Ava Garcia, Bryn Cavin, Carla Idohl-Corwin, Cheyenna Carroll, Erin Tofte, Gracie Thomsen, Heidi Wood, Holly Samuelson, Jackie Blumberg, Jennifer Johnson, Jody Pope, Julie Randall, PJ Moore, Ryan Decker, Shelly Hoffman, Virgil Matthews

A study session featuring an Athletics Update, Part One by Dr. Carli Schiffner and Holly Bringman was held 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 adopt the agenda as modified, and Aliza Esty seconded the motion. The motion carried.

VI. Public Comment

Aidan Vicario, an Aberdeen High School Running Start student, read the City of Aberdeen proclamation recognizing June as Aberdeen Students' Recognition Month.

VII. Celebration

Dr. Carli Schiffner recognized Gina Stinson and Zoey Johnson for being named to the All-Washington Academic Team. Although they were unable to attend, Dr. Schiffner shared remarks recognizing their achievement.

Dr. Schiffner also recognized Molly Zinkle for earning a Master of Science in Counseling and Mental Health from St. Martin's University. Molly Zinkle shared remarks about her educational journey and expressed appreciation for the support she received from the College.

Dr. Schiffner also announced that Grays Harbor College received the Pacific County Economic Development Council (PCEDC) Business of the Year Award and shared that she and Trustee Jim Sayce attended the awards ceremony.

Holly Bringman recognized JEB Thornton for 20 years of service to Grays Harbor College and highlighted his many contributions to the institution, including his recent service as Interim Dean of Enrollment and Student Services. JEB shared remarks of appreciation, and the Board expressed its thanks with a standing ovation.

VIII. New Employee Introductions

Erin Tofte introduced new employees Nate Kissler, Support Specialist at Stafford Creek Correction Center (SCCC); Amy Twigg, Recruitment Facilitator; and Anthony Wolfe, Temporary IT Customer Support Journey at Stafford Creek Correction Center.

Changes in employment were also shared, including Ginelle Hanaway's appointment as Director of TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) and Jonathan Salvador's appointment as Financial Aid Outreach Specialist.

IX. Review Items

1. First Reading of Operational Policy 302 – Instruction, Academic Council, and Curriculum Development
 - a. The policy revisions were reviewed, including updates to Vice President titles. It was also noted that the policy is accompanied by an associated handbook.

X. Action Items

1. Approval of May 12, 2026 Minutes
 - a. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion to approve the May 12, 2026 Board meeting minutes. Jim Sayce moved to approve the minutes, and Aliza Esty seconded the motion. The motion carried.
2. Second Reading of Operational Policies 401 and 417
 - a. Operational Policy 401 - Admissions Policy
 - No questions were raised.
 - b. Operational Policy 417 - Title 38 USC § 3679(e) Compliance Policy
 - No questions were raised.
 - c. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion to approve Operational Policy 401 - Admissions Policy and Operational Policy 417 - Title 38 USC § 3679(e) Compliance Policy. Jim Sayce moved to approve the policies, and Aliza Esty seconded the motion. The motion carried.
3. Second Reading of Operational Policies 520 and 526

- a. Operational Policy 520 - Coffee and Light Refreshments
 - No questions were raised.
 - b. Operational Policy 526 - Internal Controls
 - No questions were raised.
 - c. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion to approve Operational Policy 520 - Coffee and Light Refreshments and Operational Policy 526 - Internal Controls. Dr. Harry Carthum moved to approve the policies, and Jim Sayce seconded the motion. The motion carried.
4. Approval of the FY27 Service & Activities (S&A) and Tech Fee Budgets
 - a. The Associated Students of Grays Harbor College (ASGHC) requested approval of the FY2027 Services & Activities (S&A) and Technology Fee Budgets. Jonni Dawson provided background on the proposed budget and explained the increases to several line items.
 - b. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion that the Board approve the FY2027 Services & Activities (S&A) Budget in the amount of \$588,615 and the FY2027 Technology Fee Budget in the amount of \$96,000, as presented. Dr. Harry Carthum moved to approve the budgets, and Jim Sayce seconded the motion. The motion carried.
 - c. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion that the Board approve the annual Services & Activities (S&A) fee increase to \$12.03 per 15 credit hours, effective for FY2027. Jim Sayce moved to approve the fee increase, and Aliza Esty seconded the motion. The motion carried.
5. Approval of the FY27 Operating Budget
 - a. Jason Gordon presented the proposed FY2026–27 Operating Budget and shared that the College is able to present a balanced budget. He reviewed the budget summary and revenue projections, noting changes to the State allocation, State provisos, and the allocation model transition. He also reviewed the proposed expenditures, including cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) and classified employee retroactive pay. He noted that the auxiliary budgets are included in the budget book for informational purposes but are not subject to Board approval.
 - b. Discussion ensued regarding the allocation model transition, State proviso changes, Running Start revenue, the State fund swap, contingency planning, and opportunities to increase local revenue. Board members also requested additional information regarding the allocation model transition and future budget reporting.
 - c. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion that the Board approve the FY2026–27 Operating Budget and related schedules, as presented, in the amount of \$24,567,684. Dr. Harry Carthum moved to approve the budget, and Aliza Esty seconded the motion. The motion carried.
6. Approval of the Memorandum of Understanding Between Grays Harbor College and the Grays Harbor College Federation of Teachers (Local 4984)
 - a. It was shared that the memorandum of understanding includes the negotiated cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) increases and increases the early retirement notification incentive to \$6,000 for faculty who provide at least 12 months' notice.
 - b. Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund called for a motion that the Board approve the Memorandum of Understanding between Grays Harbor College and the Grays Harbor College Federation of Teachers (Local 4984), as presented. Jim Sayce moved to approve the memorandum of understanding, and Aliza Esty seconded the motion. The motion carried.
7. Election of Board Officers
 - a. Astrid Aveledo nominated Dr. Paula Akerlund to continue serving as Board Chair for the 2026–27 year. Dr. Harry Carthum seconded the nomination. The motion carried.
 - b. Dr. Paula Akerlund nominated Astrid Aveledo to continue serving as Board Vice Chair for

- the 2026–27 year. Dr. Harry Carthum seconded the nomination. The motion carried.
- c. Jim Sayce will continue serving as the Board's Legislative Representative.
 - d. Aliza Esty will continue serving as the Board's Fiscal Liaison and Foundation representative.

XI. Standing Reports

1. Student Government Report (Isaac Humiston)

Isaac Humiston shared a personal update and noted that this was his final Board meeting as President of the Associated Students of Grays Harbor College (ASGHC). He highlighted the written report included in the Board packet. The Board thanked Isaac for his service as ASGHC President.

2. Classified Staff Report (Ryan Decker)

Ryan Decker shared that the Staff Development and Training Committee (SDTC) Spring Cart fundraiser was held on May 19. He also noted that SDTC will be hosting the Staff Training for Technical and Community Colleges (STTACC) Conference in August, which will include presentations by several Grays Harbor College faculty and staff.

3. Represented Exempt Staff Report (Deanna Shedley)

No additional updates.

4. Faculty report (Anita Plagge)

Terri Bell presented the faculty report on behalf of Anita Plagge.

5. Administrative Services Report (Jason Gordon)

Jason Gordon provided an update on the Lake Swano project, noting that the College is meeting with the firm that submitted a proposal for the design phase. Discussion also occurred regarding pursuing letters of support from local conservation organizations, the Washington State Department of Transportation, and other partners, as well as working with the State Board to request capital funding during the next biennium.

6. Human Resources Report (Erin Tofte)

Erin Tofte highlighted that the College fully utilized its federal work-study funding for the year. She also shared that negotiations for the Corrections Education portion of the faculty contract are ongoing and are anticipated to come before the Board for approval in July or August. Erin Tofte also provided hiring updates, including the appointment of the Associate Dean of Stafford Creek Corrections Center.

7. Learning & Student Success Report (Holly Bringman)

Holly Bringman invited Lizbeth Sanchez, Annalee Atwell-Tobar, and Marisela Martinez to provide an update on the English Language Acquisition (ELA) program. They shared that 17 ELA students earned their high school diplomas this year and highlighted recent outreach efforts, including participation on a local Spanish-language radio station to promote the program and the College. Discussion occurred regarding expanding ELA course offerings, increasing program awareness, and ELA instruction at the correctional centers.

Lori Christmas presented an overview of the Running Start Class of 2026, reporting 344 students representing 18 high schools, with 135 degrees earned. She also shared that 65 graduates will be recognized as President's Scholars, including 11 students who earned a 4.0 GPA. Discussion ensued regarding the continued growth of the Running Start program and future outreach efforts.

Holly Bringman concluded by reporting a slight increase in fall enrollment and highlighted ongoing efforts to recruit and retain students.

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

Dr. Carli Schiffner reported that the College is wrapping up the academic year with numerous celebrations and recognition events. She also shared updates on enrollment efforts and ongoing interventions to support current and future students. Legislative engagement continues, including a meeting with Senator Claire Wilson at the Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW) and an invitation for Senator Wilson to attend the Stafford Creek Correction Center (SCCC) graduation in August.

a. Accreditation (Kristy Anderson)

No additional updates.

b. Phone System (Derek Edens)

Derek Edens provided an overview of the College's phone system and the Information Technology department's role in supporting it in partnership with departments across campus. Discussion ensued regarding the purpose of the phone tree, methods for evaluating customer service after calls are answered, the current phone system configuration, and future opportunities, including the potential use of a chatbot.

9. Board Reports

a. Foundation Meeting Report (Aliza Esty)

Aliza Esty shared updates from her first Foundation meeting. She reported that the Quinault Ocean Committee established an endowment with the Foundation, and that a recent donor established a scholarship to assist students with past due balances.

Lisa Smith invited Lori Christmas to provide an update on World Class Scholars. Lori Christmas shared that graduating seniors received a total of 263 World Class Scholars awards this year. Lisa Smith noted that eligible students receive \$2,000 for their first year and \$3,000 for their second year.

b. Legislative Committee Report (Jim Sayce)

Jim Sayce shared that the Legislative Committee has concluded its work for the year and will resume meeting in the fall. He noted that the Lake Swano project and the Running Start outcomes presented during the meeting will be important topics to highlight in future discussions with legislators. Jim Sayce also expressed interest in discussing potential State budget reductions with Dr. Carli Schiffner.

c. Fiscal Liaison Report (Aliza Esty)

Aliza Esty shared that she met with Jason Gordon prior to the meeting to review the budget presentation. She encouraged Board members to submit questions in advance of the September fiscal year end budget presentation.

d. Items of Interest (Dr. Paula Akerlund)

An informational summary regarding the off-cycle tenure process was included in the Board binders. Board members were encouraged to direct any questions to the appropriate College staff.

The Board Retreat is expected to be held on Wednesday, July 15. Board members were encouraged to review the draft agenda and provide feedback.

A potential collaboration opportunity with a restorative justice organization in Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW) was shared. Follow-up discussions with the College will continue.

The meeting recessed at 3:33 PM and reconvened at 3:43 PM.

XII. Executive Session

The Board entered a closed executive session at 3:43 PM under RCW 42.30.110 to consult with legal counsel regarding personnel matters. The session was originally scheduled to last approximately 20 minutes and was subsequently extended twice for an additional five minutes each. The Board reconvened in open session at 4:13 PM.

XIII. Action Items as a Result of the Executive Session

Jim Sayce moved that the Board approve the employment contract for President Dr. Carli Schiffner for the period of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, as presented. Astrid Aveledo seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

XIV. Good of the Order

None.

XV. Adjournment/next meeting

There being no further business, Chair Dr. Paula Akerlund adjourned the meeting at 4:19 PM. The Board of Trustees will hold its next meeting on July 14, 2026 at 1:00 PM, at Grays Harbor College in Aberdeen and via Zoom.

Dr. Carli Schiffner, Secretary

Dr. Paula Akerlund, Chair