

**Minutes Regular Meeting
Cascadia College Board of Trustees
September 20, 2023**

**Cascadia College
19345 Campus Way NE
Bothell, WA 98011**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Present: Dr. Colleen Ponto, Chair; Alex Lee; Angie Hinojos; Norman Seabrooks (remote)
Absent: Dr. Meghan Quint Vice-Chair

EXECUTIVE STAFF

Dr. Jashoda Bothra, Chari Davenport, Dr. Kerry Levett, Erin Blakeney, Dr. Eric Murray, Lana Smith (AAG, outgoing) Ellen Evans (incoming AAG), Meagan Walker not present.

Teya Viola (recorder) present.
Thais Lima (presentation assistant) present.

AREA REPRESENTATIVES

CCCFT Representative – David Shapiro, Senior 2 Tenured Founding Faculty present.
Student Representative – Miyauki Sandoval, EAB Advocacy Chair present.
WPEA Representatives –Julia Williams present. Ryan Higgins was absent

AUDIENCE

Audience members attending in person and via Zoom included:
Kelly Leahy, Ifrah Mohamed, Jason Rue, Michael Horn, Becky Riopel, Shandy Stomieroski, Larissa Tikhonova, Linda Richards, Erik Tingelstad, Bryan Fauth, Chantal Carrancho, Victor Begley, Thuy Pham, Robyn Ferret, Jessica Ketcham, and Kristina Young
EAB students present: Miriam Alhassani, Zuah Han, Brandon Lai, Veronica Martinez, Anthony Rodgers, Selina Wu, Julianna Lin, Hiya Mehta, Monica He

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Colleen Ponto called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM

2. CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Colleen Ponto asked for approval of the consent agenda.

MOTION: Trustee, Angie Hinojos made a motion to approve. Trustee Alex Lee seconded the motion.

APPROVED. Unanimously. No Abstentions.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Supplemental materials are attached as Addenda A, B & C

Julia Williams, WPEA representative, read the following statement (submitted via email

ADDENDUM A

9/21/23):

Thank you for your time. As many of you know, I am Julia Williams the union representative for the Washington Public Employees here at Cascadia College. I am entering a public comment because Dr. Murray made it clear to my supervisor that I was not welcome to speak during the WPEA union portion of this board meeting.

In June I came a spoke of the union concerns around Cascadia's approach and response to diversity equity and inclusion on campus. I had hoped to come here today to deliver an overwhelmingly positive report of the collaborative efforts taken since June.

I cannot do that. I will report that there has been some meaningful movement on one specific formal union filing. The college and the office of financial management and the union continue to make progress on that one issue. Though the process has been bumpy. I cannot say there has been no progress there.

Shortly after my last appearance to the board, Dr. Murray launched false accusations against me to the president of the WPEA. (I will happily supply this with my public comment documentation after the meeting.) This letter suggested that I, personally, should not represent the WPEA members at Cascadia College, because of my former employment with the institution, which you might recall the president was overly eager to share with the board. I need to be clear, I no longer work for Cascadia College, I work for the members of the WPEA who are currently employed by Cascadia College.

The college suggested that my address to the board in June negatively impacted whether and how students and staff access the services offered by the Equity and inclusion office. But that is the point I am making, staff are indicating that they are already experiencing negative impacts. That they are limited on their ability to access Equity and Inclusion services. They are afraid to speak up. They are silenced. The reason I came to speak in June was to raise the concerns on behalf of those I work for, the staff of Cascadia.

Everyone deserves to feel safe, everyone. Staff, faculty, students at Cascadia, deserve to feel safe, especially at work. The college has not taken steps toward addressing this, but rather responded by attempting to silence the voice who brought forth the concerns.

I ask, board, that you consider these actions. I ask that you help return Cascadia to the safe space it once was. So that the entire Cascadia community can share openly. If Dr. Murray is willing to take these actions against the union representative for whom he has no authority over, no wonder staff and faculty who work for him feel like they are silenced or are otherwise afraid to speak openly.

I hope, with the new leadership in HR, the union and the college might return to a more collaborative relationship focused on the true issues that face this college.

4. INTRODUCTIONS OF NEW EMPLOYEES/PROMOTIONS

- **Welcome to New Trustee, Alex Lee**

- Eric Murray introduced Alex Lee, incoming trustee. His nomination was approved by Governor Inslee over the summer. Alex comes in with Cascadia experience as a former Foundation Chair. Alex's background is as a financial advisor, and he lives in Kirkland. The group welcomed Alex.
AAG Lana Smith reminded the trustees that Alex should go through the formal trustee training process sometime before the next Board meeting.

- **Introduction of New Employees/Promotions**

- Kristina Young introduced Kelly Leahy, our new Instructional Designer. Kelly is a former librarian, and comes to us with a background in curriculum development.
- Erik Tingelstad introduced Thuy Pham, new Prof-Tech Program Advisor. Thuy is a graduate of the CCF English Language program and former student ambassador. Thuy is excited to begin working with students as a former student herself.
- Eric Murray introduced our two new co-directors of Human Resources, Ifrah Mohamed and Jason Rue. Both are excited to join Cascadia – and are especially about this new co-director model. They look forward to working together toward building and improving HR structures and processes.
- AAG Lana Smith introduced the new AAG Ellen Evans who will be serving as Cascadia's AAG upon their upcoming retirement. Ellen's background in English Literature and she also has a PhD in Higher Ed Curriculum and Instruction and

now blends these with a legal degree from Seattle U. Lana is confident that Ellen will be an excellent AAG for Cascadia.

There were a number of employee promotions that occurred over the summer and those were included with this month's board packet:

- Alia Mahdi – Executive Assistant to Operations Manager
- Chantal Carrancho – Associate Dean to Dean of Student Learning
- Chari Davenport – Executive Director to Vice President of Equity & Inclusion
- Daniel Tran – IT Support Analyst to Systems Administrator
- Erin Blakeney – Dean to Vice President of Student Success Services
- Huda Sarhan – Program Specialist 3 to Assistant Director of Enrollment Services
- Jacqueline Webb – Program Assistant to Program Specialist 2
- Linda Richard – Tenure Track Faculty to Tenured Faculty
- Nara Tseesuren – Fiscal Technician 2 to Fiscal Analyst 2
- Nicholas Eddington – IT Support Analyst to Systems Administrator
- Rachel Druck – Customer Service Specialist 3 to Program Specialist 3- Credentialing

- **Student Leader Introductions**

Becky Riopel provided an overview of what the Student Events and Advocacy Board does, and the new student members introduced themselves:

- Miyuki Sandoval – Advocacy Chair
- Miriam Alhassani – Programming Chair
- Zuah Han – Clubs Coordinator
- Brandon Lai – Events Coordinator
- Veronica Martinez - Events Coordinator
- Anthony Rodgers - Events Coordinator
- Selina Wu – Outreach & Marketing
- Julianna Lin - Outreach & Marketing
- Hiya Mehta - Outreach & Marketing
- Monica He – Graphic Designer

Eric Murray also introduced Miyuki Sandoval who is the new EAB Student Advocacy Chair. Eric and Miyuki will meet monthly to share information and ask questions. Eric is especially excited to continue this mode of ongoing and transparent two-way communication between students and leadership. Miyuki is excited for the opportunity to represent students, participate in these conversations, and provide information in this body.

Amended Agenda Item:

Trustee Chair Colleen Ponto submitted an amendment to the agenda for approval.

Eric Murray presented an amendment to recognize, commend, and thank Lana Smith for the excellent service they have provided to Cascadia as AAG since 2005.

Motion to approve: Colleen Ponto

Seconded: Angie Hinojos

APPROVED: Unanimous- with a standing ovation. No abstentions

5. INFORMATION ITEMS

- **Strategic Story: City of Kenmore Learning Gaps Program**

Dr. Kerry Levett presented information about this new grant-funded program that will provide typically underrepresented students with resources and instruction to help them overcome learning gaps experienced as a result of the covid pandemic. The coordinator from the City of Kenmore is a Cascadia graduate, as is her son, so all partners are excited about the support and opportunities this program will provide.

Questions:

Trustee Hinojos asked for clarification on which schools this program will work with.

This program will serve juniors and seniors in the Kenmore City Limits. Trustee Lee asked whether mental health services will be provided as part of this program. Yes, students will be partnered with Cascadia faculty or staff as mentors who will be able to provide various resources for full wrap-around support.

Trustee Hinojos asked how students will be identified for the program. We will be working with high school counselors to help identify and admit hopefully up to approximately 100 students in the first year. The hope is to be able to grow for future years.

- **Policy Overview (EM)**

Dr Eric Murray reminded the Board members about the process for reviewing Cascadia Policies. Eric will be sending the second section (of three total sections) to the members via email. They are expected to read through and provide updates and feedback on these policies for final revisions and approval at the November meeting. More detailed instructions will be provided in the email.

- **Campus Safety Overview (EM)**

Meagan Walker is out of the country on a student recruitment trip so Eric Murray provided an update on the status of the Campus Safety Committee and its activities. Considering national events related to public interactions with police officers, Cascadia and UWB are collaborating and discussing what Campus Safety on campus should look like. They will have a formal recommendation finalized in December. A slideshow was provided ahead of this meeting with more detail on this.

6. DISCUSSION/PRESENTATION ITEMS

- **Year-in-Review: Equity & Inclusion (CD)**

Chari Davenport provided more information on the programs and services managed by the Office of Equity and Inclusion such as the Cascadia Scholars Program, Diversity & Equity Center, the Foundations of E&I course, as well as upcoming Cascadia (Kenmore) Academy and developing a relationship with Leadership Eastside.

- These programs have grown exponentially from 21-22 to 22-23 and now to 23-24.
- The Instagram Campaign designed and run by Cascadia Scholars to highlight students, events and workshop was immensely successful. The E&I Office will begin open drop-in office hours for anyone to come in to discuss issues or concerns.
- The college is growing its Affinity Groups for staff and faculty and this year will be adding several Affinity Groups specifically for students.

More detail on these programs is available in the slideshow provided with the packet.

Questions:

- Trustee Hinojos appreciated the efforts that have gone into these programs and enjoys seeing their success and expansions.
- Trustee Lee echoes that sentiment. Figuring out how to manage such success and growth is a wonderful problem.
- Eric Murray read part of an email from representatives of the Riverview School District asking to participate in the Foundations of E&I course. This is an example of how Chari and our programs are becoming a beacon for E&I in this community.

- **Mission Fulfillment Update (KL)**

Dr Kerry Levett reported that now that we are in our third year of this Strategic Mission, it is exciting to actually have two years of data upon which we can reflect and assess.

- It is important to be able to clarify what we do and also be able to show how we

do it. For example, what does we **really** mean when we talk about mission fulfillment?

- We need to be able to show and describe how we have operationalized our strategic initiatives
- An important next step is figuring out how we tell our story, and look at what have we done successfully so we can make way for new initiatives.

More detail on these programs is available in the slideshow provided with the packet

Questions:

- Trustee Hinojos asked in relation to Operationalizing these strategies that sometimes this means some may also need to be retired. What would that look like? KL: we would look at the data to determine whether a program or an initiative is still relevant, and write a narrative explaining why it is or isn't, and from there determine if it should be sunsetted or possibly evolved into something else.
- Trustee Lee commented that it was great to hear that important decisions will be guided by data and with the continued paradigm of assessment and evaluation.
- Trustee Ponto commented that looking forward, it will be great to eventually see the data that will become available on the new programs and initiatives that are being implemented this year.
- Eric Murray provided an example of a major change that happened last year that we now have data to assess. Last year we began opening registration for both Winter and Spring quarters at the same time. Looking at those enrollment numbers and when the enrollments occurred we can see that this move-enabling and encouraging students to enroll in both terms together- significantly increased the numbers of students that enrolled in those terms overall.

- **Risk Mitigation: Staffing Stability (EM)**

Eric Murray used the theater as a metaphor to set the stage regarding the precarious position we are in related to staffing troubles and the great resignation that- for various reasons- has hit Cascadia especially hard this last year.

- We've been fortunate that while not untouched, faculty positions have remained relatively stable. Eric re-confirmed the college's commitment to faculty and to bringing sabbaticals back hopefully as soon as 24-25 academic year, and to refilling the vacant full-time faculty positions.
- The good news is that the board approved an operational budget anticipating enrollment declines that would necessitate cuts, but it now looks like enrollment for Fall is actually up by approximately 12%. We'll know the real numbers in early October after our 10th day headcount is final.
- The college is reinvesting in staffing incrementally in multiple ways for example with internal promotions, restructures (especially the new co-director model in HR that aims to improve professional development, and hiring practices) and creating several new positions.
- We still have vulnerabilities- it will be some time before the Finance office is stable. We are way behind on audit compliance, but slowly but surely those will be completed.

Questions:

- Trustee Hinojos asked when we'll have enrollment numbers for Winter and Spring. Enrollment for those quarters begins in early November so that data won't be available until early next year.
- Trustee Lee asked how far behind we are on the finance audits. Auditing a fiscal year can take 3-5 months, so it may be a full year before we are fully caught up and have clean and navigable data.
- Trustee Lee asked what activities are happening above us related to

accountability on ctcLink? Eric explained that he led a team of other ctc presidents that formally demanded accountability and action from the state board on the havoc that this software conversion has created. That complaint is travelling slowly through the state boards' various governing bodies. Eric will keep us updated on these developments.

7. RECOMMENDED ACTION ITEMS

- **1) 2023-2024 Election of Chair and Vice Chair**
Meghan Quint Chair and Angie Hinojos Vice Chair
Motion to approve: Alex Lee
Seconded: Norman Seabrook
APPROVED: Unanimous. No abstentions
- **2) 2023-2024 Legislative Action Committee BOT Rep**
The Board of Trustees Vice Chair will now typically pick up this role of legislative representative to ACT. This year it will be Trustee Angie Hinojos.
Motion to approve: Alex Lee
Seconded: Angie Hinojos
APPROVED: Unanimous. No abstentions
- **3) 2023-2024 Sub-Committee Membership (Finance, Strategic Planning)**
For the Finance Committee, Alex Lee and Colleen Ponto will serve as reps.
For Strategic Planning Committee, Norm Seabrooks and Angie Hinojos will serve as reps
Motion to approve: Angie Hinojos
Seconded: Alex Lee
APPROVED: Unanimous. No abstentions
- **4) 2023-2024 School District Reps**
Representatives for the local school districts board meetings are typically decided by geographic locations. School district board meetings are typically held once a month. Cascadia designates a primary and a backup for each district.
 - Lake Washington: Norm Seabrooks and Alex Lee
 - Northshore: Colleen Ponto and Meghan Quint
 - Riverview Primary: Angie HinojosMotion to approve: Alex Lee
Seconded: Angie Hinojos
APPROVED: Unanimous. No abstentions

8. OTHER REPORTS

- **Cascadia Events & Advocacy Board (EAB)**
Student representative Miyuki Sandoval shared information on upcoming events the EAB is sponsoring and planning.
 - The always popular ice cream social is coming up
 - Jumpstart Orientations begin tomorrow (Sept 21). Students and staff are working to create an inclusive, welcoming, and accessible environment for our incoming studentsEric Murray re-affirmed to Miyuki that her participation at these Board of Trustees meetings is important, appreciated and welcome, and that the board members will be calling on her often for input!

- **Cascadia Community College Federation of Teachers**
David Shapiro reflected on the timeliness of the message of yesterday's keynote speaker, Dr Jeremiah Sims, who spoke on Radical Inclusivity and Radical Love. He also acknowledged and appreciated Dr Murray's earlier commitment to faculty and bringing sabbaticals back as soon as possible.
- **Cascadia Classified Union Washington Public Employees Association**
No report, Julia Williams was no longer in the meeting.
- **Board Chair and Individual Board Members**
No reports at this time
- **President**
No additional reports

9. OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

No other announcements.

10. MEETING ADJOURNMENT

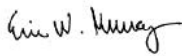
Chair Ponto adjourned the regular meeting at 5:53 pm.

11. Minutes Approved and Adopted on, October 18, 2023.



Meagan Quint, Board Chair

Attest:



Dr. Eric Murray, President

Bdminutes09202023

ADDENDUM B

From: [Julia Williams](#)
To: [Murray, Eric](#)
Cc: [Embleton, Ketra](#)
Subject: RE: For the minutes
Date: Thursday, June 15, 2023 11:24:00 AM

Here is my statement to the board last night:

Thank you, Ryan for that union update. Members of the board, thank you for your dedication to Cascadia college, and for this opportunity to speak. I am Julia Williams the Washington Public Employees Association Member Representative. I am the union rep for classified employees here at Cascadia.

Today my address is very brief but a high priority to the union. Some of you are aware of my history with Cascadia College some of you are not. I worked here, rank and file in student services for 7 years prior to accepting my position with the union. For years and years Cascadia was widely regarded as leading the way in Washington higher education institutions in their work, efforts, and expectations around diversity, equity and inclusion for staff, faculty, and students.

I am here today because many employees currently and formerly employed at Cascadia have brought to the union's attention feel this isn't the case anymore. They have felt unsafe or been silenced when speaking up about concerns around DEI. This impacts employee morale, employee wellbeing, productivity, and overall sense of belonging.

I am not here to bring specific concerns but rather to raise awareness around this issue. Specific concerns have been brought up to HR recently and it is my understanding that the college intends to address some of these concerns through formal and informal processes.

Having these issues adequately addressed is a high priority to the WPEA. I look forward being able to report at the next regular board meeting that all concerns have been or are in the process of being adequately addressed.

Again, thank you for your time.

Be well, stay safe!



Julia Williams

Member Representation Specialist

Pronouns: she/her/hers

P 360.490.8469 **E** julia@wpea.org **W** <http://www.wpea.org/>

Become a member: [Sign up here!](#)

From: Murray, Eric <emurray@cascadia.edu>
Sent: Thursday, June 15, 2023 9:43 AM
To: Julia Williams <Julia@wpea.org>
Cc: Embleton, Ketra <kembleton@cascadia.edu>
Subject: For the minutes

Hi Julia –

I haven't been able to connect with Ketra this morning as our schedules are different. If you haven't already, could you please submit your comments from last night to her so that we can have them for the minutes?
Thanks.

Please cc me if would. I'll be on vacation starting at 11am today until July 5.

Thanks.

Eric

ADDENDUM C

From: [Walker, Meagan](#)
To: [Dana Spain](#)
Cc: [Julia Williams](#); [Bothra, Jashoda](#); [Boesenberg, John](#); [Murray, Eric](#)
Subject: Letter of Concern from Cascadia College (sent on behalf of Dr. Eric Murray by Acting President, Meagan Walker, VP for External Relations & Planning)
Date: Tuesday, June 20, 2023 4:31:33 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[EMurraysig.png](#)
[Cascadia College Letter of Concern.doc](#)



June 20, 2023

Dana Spain
WPEA President
WPEA – UFCW Local 365
140 Percival Street NW
Olympia, WA 98502
wpeapresident@wpea.org

Dear Ms. Spain:

This letter expresses concerns about comments made by Julia Williams, WPEA Representative, during Cascadia’s Board of Trustees June 14, 2023 meeting. The comments potentially undermined the integrity of our investigation into Grievance #23-HE-008 and have implications on our ability to have a productive relationship with WPEA.

The college was originally informed by shop steward Ryan Higgins that Ms. Williams’ comments would be as such:

Julia will be in attendance in order to represent the union and to speak only in brief about the issue we discussed. Her plan is to only mention that there is a staff issue impacting classified staff that HR is working to resolve, the plan being to not mention any particular staff or the exact issue as we are hoping that HR can resolve the problem.

Based on direct conversation with Ms. Williams, it was our understanding that her

comments would be as described by Mr. Higgins, with focus on the impact to staff morale and hope that the issues would be resolved through the processes in place. We agreed that such comments were fair. However, the public comments went beyond the indication that a grievance had been filed and offered unsubstantiated opinions to the trustees and the public before due process had been allowed.

College administration has the following concerns regarding Ms. Williams comments:

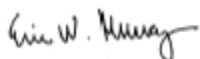
1. Ms. Williams spoke to the nature of the grievance and indicated that the culture of the college no longer leans into equity and inclusion. This observation was made without first determining the facts of the case or having a complete sense of the scope of the college's equity and inclusion efforts. Her comments potentially negatively impact whether and how students and staff access the services offered by the Equity and Inclusion office.
2. Ms. Williams identified the specific office implicated in the grievance. Because Cascadia is a small college, this essentially identified the employees involved in the grievance and potentially influenced any witnesses who may have been present, listening to the board meeting, or who may review the board meeting minutes. Ms. Williams comments were potentially harmful to our successful conclusion of the above-referenced grievance.
3. Ms. Williams' comments included allegations made by exempt employees. She should not speak on behalf of non-represented employees when speaking in her official capacity as a WPEA official.

It is the belief of college leadership that Ms. Williams' previous employment with Cascadia, spanning 7 years before her position with WPEA, affects her ability to fairly and in good faith represent the members of our local unit. Past experiences and passions certainly are interwoven into her current duties.

As the President of Cascadia College, I strive to have a positive and productive relationship with each member of our community, including employees and their representatives. With this in mind, I ask that the two of us meet to ensure we avoid missteps like this in the future. I would like to request that the two of us have a conversation that results in concrete actions that help us reestablish a relationship that works for your members and our employees.

As I will be unavailable through July 5, I ask that any response in the next few weeks be directed to Dr. Jashoda Bothra, Vice President of Administrative Services.

Thank you.



Eric W. Murray, Ph.D.
President

Cc: Dr. Jashoda Bothra
Mr. John Bosenberg
Ms. Julia Williams