

# Clark College

## Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 25, 2023

GHL 213 and Zoom

### In Attendance

Paul Speer, Chair  
Denise Gideon, Trustee  
Jeanne Bennett, Trustee

### Absent

Cristhian Canseco Juarez, Vice Chair  
Rekah Strong, Trustee

### Administrators

Dr. Karin Edwards, President  
Dr. Michele Cruse, Vice President of Student Affairs  
Jim Wilkins-Luton, Interim Vice President of Instruction  
Sabra Sand, Vice President of Operations  
Vanessa Neal, Interim Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
Calen Ouellette, CEO, Clark College Foundation  
Brad Avakian, Vice President of Human Resources  
Das Gupta, Interim Chief Information Officer

### Other

Shelley Williams, Assistant Attorney General  
Brooke Pillsbury, Senior Executive  
Julie Taylor, Executive Assistant  
Brandon Johnson, IT  
Donna Larson, Interim Associate Vice President of Instruction  
Casey Figone, ASCC  
Joey Hicklin, WPEA Co-Chair  
Suzanne Southerland, CCAHE  
Karen R., Interpreter  
Shivani Saunders, Interpreter  
Tiffany Elkington, CART

## I. Call to Order/Agenda Review

Chair Speer called the Regular Meeting to order at 5:01 pm.

## II. Action Items/Consent Agenda

1. December 5, 2022, Special Meeting Minutes
2. December 7, 2022, Board Work Session Minutes
3. December 7, 2022, Board Meeting Minutes
4. 2023-2025 Academic Calendar

MOTION: Trustee Gideon motioned to approve all items on the Consent Agenda. Trustee Bennett seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

## III. Constituent Reports

### ASCC

Casey Figone, ASCC President, shared that ASCC has chartered 12 clubs, and the team is working to charter an additional seven clubs. ASCC filled seven committee slots in 2023, hired two new students for student government, joined Winter term Welcome Week, and facilitated an Involvement Fair and Quarterly Social. Figone shared that he looks forward to Pizza with the President in February.

Figone also participated in the Legislative Breakfast and the State of the College Address in January.

Following Figone's report, Chair Speer thanked him for his contribution to the Legislative Breakfast, along with alum Maddie Hennerty. Chair Speer also shared that Figone's presentation was equally well done at the State of the College, along with Imani O'Neill. Chair Speer thanked Figone for his service to the college and peer students.

### WPEA

Joey Hicklin, Co-Chair, presented on behalf of WPEA. Topics included the inclement weather closure in January and thorough messaging regarding the closure and pay. Hicklin thanked the college administration for navigating the inclement weather event and the progress made in the process.

Hicklin also shared the updated overtime exempt laws, effective January 1, and the impact on classified employees. Hicklin advised that WPEA raised concern in 2022.

However, the college invited impacted employees to provide information and training, and WPEA shared gratitude for how the college administration handled the transition.

Finally, Hicklin addressed concerns with leadership transitions, interim roles in Director, Dean, and Leadership, and how they may lead to instability.

#### CCAHE

Suzanne Southerland reported concerns about leadership transition data. Southerland acknowledged that transitions are impacting the state and nation. However, Southerland shared concern for the direct impact on the employees and students at Clark. She congratulated Transitional Studies for their work supporting the increase of refugee students and shared that AHE negotiations have started. AHE looks forward to collaborative negotiations, administratively led by Brad Avakian and Gerald Gabbard.

CCAHE is co-sponsoring the Riverside Equity Conference in April at Clark. They are also participating in lobby days on January 26 and February 20, with support from college and union presidents. CCAHE is focused on COLA, and salary increases fully funded by the state.

#### Clark College Foundation

CEO Calen Ouellette shared gratitude for Dr. Edwards for the State of the College Address and the Foundation and Legislative acknowledgment during the address. Clark College Foundation is celebrating 50 years in 2023, with a solid base to build from as Foundation moves forward.

Ouellette shared the Foundation's focus on data collection, including those supporting Clark through volunteerism and fiscal support, and is looking to connect more with those that pass through Penguin Nation for advocacy, ambassadorship, and community connection. The Foundation is also focused on aligning the college and Foundation and maximizing the impact on the college and the partnership.

#### Chair Speer Feedback: Constituent Reports

Chair Speer provided these additional comments at the completion of constituent reports:

The Board appreciates constituent reports as context for our work. These reports provide a way to better understand each area's successes, challenges, and opportunities in service to Clark's students.

In that spirit, because of the way the text is recorded in the update section of the packet, and some of the comments made tonight, I do want to make a few comments as well:

It is not appropriate for the board or the college to publicly comment on any, respectfully private, individual HR decision. Human Resources is also an operational matter of the college, not a board duty. That said as it relates to speculation and calls for investigations into Executive Cabinet turnover:

- Part of the role of the President is to consider the short and long term needs of the college, and each cabinet member's personal and professional goals, in making staffing decisions. The board is regularly advised and has complete confidence in President Edwards' ability to thoughtfully work through these decisions.
- The Board also appreciates that with staffing changes Dr. Edwards is being both strategic, and that she recognizes in the short term that leadership changes can be unsettling and may cause additional work during those transitions. She publicly acknowledged this at the State of the College event last week and places a high priority on having a strong leadership team.

What we know is that increased turnover in community colleges is a national phenomenon – not just a Clark challenge. A recent *Inside Higher Ed* article reported that between early 2020 and mid 2022 institutions had lost 13 percent of their employees nationally - now a year later those numbers are likely even higher. Causes include what we all know - work/life balance, family decisions, health issues, planned retirements, and higher compensation levels in four-year universities and private industry – plus it is simply a really hard time right now. This is taking place at all levels, including executive ranks, and is especially pronounced in high demand career categories. We all see this.

The board appreciates that in support of equitable student experience and community the draft strategic plan prominently highlights employee engagement, empowerment, excellence, institutional effectiveness and equity. Achieving these requires collaboration at and between all levels and strong leadership. It also requires a culture of trusting, caring, and appreciating each other as each part of the team does their work. The language in the college's draft strategic plan is aspirational, setting a high bar for us all. Even as we consider the updates we provide each other at board meetings we all have an opportunity to role model the organization we can be proud of and want to be a part of.

#### IV. Clark College Veterans Center of Excellence

Presented by Megan Anderson, Veterans Center of Excellence Advisor

Megan Anderson provided a comprehensive overview of the Veterans Center of Excellence (VCOE) team, the office and what's offered to students in the administrative

space, whom the Center serves, and how many students are currently supported through funding, textbooks and grants, and specific funding to support Anderson as an advisor.

Anderson also highlighted recent events, including Veterans Suicide Awareness Month (flag display on campus – 22 flags per day representing the 22 veterans who lose their lives to suicide each day), Vancouver Veterans Day Parade, Clark County Veterans Assistance Center Stand Down event, and Clark Military Appreciation Committee (CMAC) (semi-monthly).

Board of Trustees Questions and Discussion:

Trustee Bennett shared gratitude for the report, enlightening VCOE overview, and excitement for the good work. Bennett inquired about how the VCOE recruits enrolled students into the program and resources. Anderson shared that the team works across campus to spread the word through collaboration, participation in events, and working cross-departmentally to learn about students receiving veterans' benefits.

Trustee Gideon – Thanked Anderson for the presentation and for the work the team is doing to support veterans. As a fellow veteran, the VCOE specifically resonates with Gideon.

Chair Speer shared Clark's long tradition of supporting veterans in the community and his appreciation for the work the team is doing. Speer inquired about access to the Veterans Center at the college vs Vancouver. For example, if a veteran isn't taking classes or is an alum, can they continue to use the location as a place for community? Anderson shared that the VCOE has not specifically encountered this situation, but they do have a great relationship with Vancouver to share information. Anderson clarified that if there's a way the VCOE can help, they work to do that. The current VCOE team are veterans and are committed to sharing knowledge, resources, and support because they relate to the experience.

## V. Reports from the Board Members

Trustee Bennett – Bennett shared that it has been a busy month. She is excited to participate in the Foundation Executive Committee meeting and appreciates Calen's service since joining the Foundation. Bennett has also learned more about the Foundation staff, and shared a shout-out to the Foundation Board of Directors. This month, she also participated in the Legislative Breakfast and met with Chair Speer and Dr. Edwards to discuss legislative priorities and strategies. Bennett attended the MLK Breakfast with Dr. Edwards and celebrated the important work the community is doing regarding equity and inclusion.

Trustee Gideon – Gideon shared that she attended the Trustee of Color committee, which was enlightening and reminded her how active and progressive Clark is with the drafted Strategic Plan and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Chair Speer – Speer shared the work during this legislative season to provide unified messaging across community colleges for a greater impact. Priorities include compensation, DEI and advancing the work, and workforce development. Spoken or communicated with our legislative representatives across districts. Speer participated in the opening meeting for the college's financial audit and shared meetings between BOD, BOT, and leadership. He was also on campus for the MLK celebration and Buffalo Soldiers film viewing at Clark and acknowledged the great job Dr. Edwards did on the State of the College Address. Speer also shared a personal highlight from the month of having dinner with Leilani Towner and her mother at the Transforming Lives dinner in Olympia with Dr. Edwards and Vice Chair Canseco Juarez.

## VI. President's Report

Presented by Dr. Karin Edwards

Dr. Edwards highlighted her engagement in the following:

- Welcomed Cowlitz Indian Tribe leadership to campus for a meeting, tour, and lunch.
- LSW Architects Principals meeting, discussing STEM, Gaiser Hall, and Facilities planning – LSW shared their continued support of Clark College.
- Matt Morton, Community Foundation CEO – discussing alignment between the college and community.
- MLK Celebration
- College Spark Washington Board Meeting
- Council for the Homeless – discussing the use of education as a tool to break the cycle of homelessness.
- Boschma Farms – scheduled to break ground in Summer 2023.
- Legislative Breakfast
- State of the College
- WAACT Olympia Legislative Visit
- WACTC Meeting
- Final stages of the Vice President of Information Technology interviewing

Dr. Edwards concluded her President's Report by acknowledging the leadership openings, the impact of transitions across the nation, and the importance of ensuring that the appropriate individuals were in leadership positions to meet the college's priorities moving forward.

VII. Public Comment

Beverly Brosius  
Robert Westin

VIII. Executive Session

There was no Executive Session held.

IX. Next Meeting

The Board of Trustees is currently scheduled for a Work Session and Regular Meeting on February 22, 2023, starting at 3:30 pm.

X. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

A handwritten signature in cursive ink that reads "Paul Speer". The signature is fluid and written in a single continuous line.

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Paul Speer, Chair

Brooke Pillsbury, Recorder