

## **I. STUDY SESSION**

### **1. Call to Order**

Chair Jessica Norouzi called the meeting to order at 9:07 A.M. and noted a quorum.

### **2. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

## **II. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

1. An Executive Session was called to review the performance of a public employee for purposes of Tenure, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (RCW 42.30). The executive session was called for one hour and forty-three minutes.

At 10:50 A.M., the executive session was extended for five minutes until 10:55 A.M.

At 10:55 A.M., the executive session was extended for two minutes until 10:57 A.M.

At 10:57 A.M., the executive session was extended for two minutes until 10:59 A.M.

At 10:59 A.M., the executive session was extended for one minute until 11:00 A.M.

The executive session concluded at 11:00 A.M. The Board returned to open session for a break.

2. An Executive Session was called to review the performance of a public employee for purposes of Tenure, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (RCW 42.30). The executive session was called for one hour and forty minutes.

At 12:45 P.M., the executive session was extended for five minutes until 12:50 P.M.

The executive session concluded at 12:50 P.M. The Board returned to open session for a break.

3. An Executive Session was called to review the performance of a public employee for purposes of Tenure, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (RCW 42.30). The executive session was called for one hour and fifteen minutes.

At 2:40 P.M., the executive session was extended for five minutes until 2:45 P.M.

The executive session concluded at 2:45 P.M. The Board returned to open session.

4. Meetings

A. Regular Board Meeting – March 19, 2025 at 3:00 P.M.

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for March 19, 2025 at 3:00 P.M.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business, Trustee Bob Zappone motioned to adjourn the Board of Trustees meeting at 2:46 P.M. Trustee Frieda Takamura seconded, and the motion carried.

### III. REGULAR BOARD MEETING

1. Call to Order

Chair Jessica Norouzi called the meeting to order at 3:02 P.M. and noted a quorum.

2. Adoption of Minutes

A. February 19, 2025 – Special Session and Regular Meeting

Trustee Takamura introduced a motion to approve the minutes for the special and regular meeting held on February 19, 2025. Trustee Zappone seconded, and the motion carried

3. Action Item

A. Tenure Advancements

Chair Norouzi thanked the committees for their due diligence and support of tenure candidates along the way. The service of tenure committees helps the Board ensure that each candidate has been prepared for this process. Trustee Frieda Takamura expressed how happy and proud she is as a trustee that so many people are doing so much work to make RTC a success. The tenure candidates and committees all are a model to Trustee Takamura. Trustee Zappone congratulated everyone who has made this advancement in their careers.

i. Advancements from First to Second Year Status:

*After considering the recommendation of the tenure review committee and all other recommendations, Chair Norouzi moved that Kristin Ferguson be promoted from first year to second year status. Vice Chair Cooper seconded, and the motion carried.*

*After considering the recommendation of the tenure review committee and all other recommendations, Trustee Zappone moved that Danielle Perkins be promoted from first year to second year status. Trustee Takamura seconded, and the motion carried.*

*After considering the recommendation of the tenure review committee and all other recommendations, Trustee Takamura moved that Jingxia ("Selinda") Shi be*

*promoted from first year to second year status. Vice Chair Tim Cooper seconded, and the motion carried.*

ii. Advancements from Second to Third Year Status:

*After considering the recommendation of the tenure review committee and all other recommendations, Vice Chair Cooper moved that Olla Ibrahim be promoted from second year to third year status. Trustee Zappone seconded, and the motion carried.*

iii. Advancements from Third Year to Tenure Status:

*After considering the recommendation of the tenure review committee and all other recommendations, Vice Chair Cooper moved that Lance Arnold be awarded tenure. Trustee Takamura seconded, and the motion carried. Chair Norouzi stated that she has been proud to watch Lance grow and get to this point and expressed appreciation for Lance's work.*

*After considering the recommendation of the tenure review committee and all other recommendations, Trustee Zappone moved that Bao Dao be denied tenure. Chair Norouzi seconded, and the motion carried.*

*After considering the recommendation of the tenure review committee and all other recommendations, Trustee Takamura moved that Jackie ("JR") Hudspeth be awarded tenure. Trustee Zappone seconded, and the motion carried.*

*After considering the recommendation of the tenure review committee and all other recommendations, Chair Norouzi moved that Fatih Killi be awarded tenure. Vice Chair Cooper seconded, and the motion carried.*

*After considering the recommendation of the tenure review committee and all other recommendations, Vice Chair Cooper moved that Priscilla Manickam-Seng be awarded tenure. Trustee Takamura seconded, and the motion carried. Vice Chair Cooper commented that he loves seeing where the Medical Assistant program is going.*

*After considering the recommendation of the tenure review committee and all other recommendations, Trustee Zappone moved that Adela Saenz be awarded tenure. Chair Norouzi seconded, and the motion carried.*

*After considering the recommendation of the tenure review committee and all other recommendations, Vice Chair Cooper moved that Wheeler Trinh be awarded tenure. Trustee Takamura seconded, and the motion carried. Chair Norouzi noted that the Automotive Technology program has grown so much over the years—kudos for growing this program!*

*After considering the recommendation of the tenure review committee and all other recommendations, Trustee Takamura moved that David Zou be awarded tenure. Vice Chair Cooper seconded, and the motion carried.*

4. Communications

A. General Information/Introductions

There were no introductions.

B. Correspondence

Trustee Takamura noted that the parking lot gates are now being closed and asked if Wi-Fi is available in the parking lots. Executive Director John Henry Whatley stated that there has been a wireless upgrade to internal buildings, but there are no repeaters that reach parking lots. Trustee Takamura stated that she wants to ensure that there is access to Wi-Fi. President Yoshiko Harden stated that the institution is open access during business hours, and she is willing to discuss meeting community need. However, her priority is keeping students and employees safe. Vice Chair Cooper stated that there is also a concern about internet security. The group agreed that students need access to Wi-Fi.

C. Public Comments from the Audience

There were no public comments.

D. Student Leadership

Brian Moffett from marketing and communications reported on RTC's first annual Tech Fair with CITL, CTS, Career Services, Computer Science, and Robotics. Leo Ragual, ASG treasurer, will attend the Student of Color Conference at Green River College which offers students the chance to build their network, enhance their leadership skills, and develop professionally and personally. Chair Norouzi stated that she is excited to hear Leo's impressions. 12 students from each college are able to attend. ASG is planning an AAPI Month with a luau, as well as a grad fair in May. Graduation is set for June 24 at ShoWare. There is a new graduation and commencement page. Marketing will go out with QR codes for more information.

E. Renton Federation of Teachers

Donna Maher, President of RFT, congratulated all newly tenured faculty and stated that it is exciting for all faculty advancing. RFT is committed to providing support for faculty and prioritizes the needs of faculty and communicating with faculty. Together, we can continue to move forward.

i. Faculty Presentations

Mike Biell, faculty from the Engineering Technology program, shared numbers that the FTEs and headcount for this program are on an upward swing. Mike polled students on the average cost of the program and a certificate program. The numbers were calculated based on current students. He also shared changes to the program that were already made. Looking at the state report, the program on the right path to target jobs. Program faculty meet with the advising committee regularly. As of last week, the call for recruiting has gone up, including Boeing. Mike is part of the non-traditional recruitment committee and is conducting a lot of outreach. The program set people on an affordable path to help them move out of their parents' home. Chair Norouzi thanked Mike for putting this information together.

Naser Chowdhury greeted the group and stated that he is a data person who appreciates that Vice President Stephanie Delaney shared a spreadsheet with costs of programs. The BAS Application Development program is working on FTE enrollment and is proposing one entry point and minimizing the adjunct faculty and costs of the program. For student recruitment, Naser visits high school programs and markets the program to students. He also brainstorms on how to attract students and how to integrate cutting edge technologies into the curriculum. Recently, the program was reviewed. Naser encourages career development, especially in high demand fields. Naser volunteers to help students to increase access to education. In his tenure portfolio, Naser mentioned that he needs time, until at least 2027, to generate revenue. Many students don't have resources to attend other universities.

Bao Dao, faculty from Machine Technologies, stated that the program has undergone revisions over the past two years. It's harder these days for students to invest in schooling while continuing to work or support their families. Machine Technologies faculty trimmed the fat that focuses on core classes. Fall 2024 was the biggest class at 12 students. A reduction in the program will make it hard to support current and future students, which will reduce the amount of machinists. Machining is a high demand field, and there are many companies that reach out looking for graduates. Machining continues to trend upwards in enrollment with demand.

Dimpy Gil thanked everyone for allowing her to speak. She understands the college is going through a financial crisis and the computer science

department is struggling with low enrollment. This started with COVID and computer science began spending Fridays brainstorming around AI and other new technologies. Dimpy believes that generic curriculum (only teaching four programming languages), the rapid expansion of AI, all contribute to low enrollment. New students may look for buzzwords, like data analytics or AI before signing up for classes. Students may be unsure if AI will replace them. Computer Science will evolve with core principles being the same. Rather than eliminating the program, a pause may allow the program to look at the market for new trends. Dimpy requests to temporarily put faculty in cybersecurity. Once the market is stable and the market has improved, we can get back to regular teaching.

Chair Norouzi stated that program reduction is to put the program in hiatus. She asked for clarity. President Harden stated that she heard Dimpy asking for faculty to be reallocated to Cybersecurity. VP Delaney stated that it is helpful to have full-time faculty on staff to be able to bring the program back should RTC want to bring the program back. An example of this is Nursing. She clarified that Dimpy was asking for faculty to be reallocated to a different department. Answering a question from the Board, Dean Warren Takata stated that adjuncts teach up to 15 credits per quarter. Vice Chair Cooper asked how many credits faculty would need to teach to be full-time. Dean Takata stated that 15 credits each quarter (minimum 45 total) is a full-time. Vice Chair Cooper stated he is concerned that we are reducing full-time faculty and there is no plan to ensure there will faculty for other programs. Vice President Lesley Hogan stated that Article 14 contains specific language that reductions in force are program specific. Faculty are tenured in a specific program, and so it is not feasible to transfer tenure to a different program. Vice Chair Cooper stated that he is very aware of the importance of honoring the contract and must trust that this is part of the process. Assistant Attorney General Michael Hemker stated that RTC cannot deviate from the contract without a breach of contract. The Board cannot take an alternative action to the CBA without reopening the CBA.

David Schoenmakers stated that he is here to defend machining. David has been here for 7 years, and both the headcount and FTE have increased each year in spite of rebounding from significant program revision. David cited different numbers from other sources. Machining is now recognized as a high demand industry. Industry manufacturing is diversifying and increased as a whole. HB 1170 is aiming for doubling manufacturing technology. Reduction to one faculty member will decrease enrollment and cause a

collapse of the program. Director Lia Homeister walked the group through Institutional Research's data protocols. Dean Shannon Matson stated that a portion of machining time is supporting other programs for cost-savings. She stated that Institutional Research program accounting is correct. It is also correct that faculty experience this in their workload. Reduction of machining faculty will result in a program restructure. The data is both correct and nuanced. There are sections of Mechatronics supported by Machining, and we would need to come up with a different plan. Chair Norouzi thanked Dave for sharing and putting this presentation together.

President Harden stated that Machining is needed in the community, but the program is underenrolled, which is why the program is up for discussion now. She stated that there will be a ripple effect that impacts people and their jobs as well as programs. This is a challenging decision because there is no 100% correct decision. Trustee Takamura asked if President Harden is confident in the data. President Harden stated that, while she is not happy about the decision, she is confident in it. She would not have brought the recommendations forward if she was not confident in the process. Chair Norouzi mentioned that the Board takes this decision very seriously and she and the Board have been engaged in these conversations .

Trustee Zappone stated that he has been through tough economic times. When you have to make these decisions, it is very difficult. There are no snap decisions. With regards to this process, it has been as transparent as it can get. Personally, Trustee Zappone was a little bothered by someone saying they have another idea at the last minute. When making a decision like this, the Board needs time to be thoughtful before making a decision. President Harden stated that the timing has not been ideal in many ways. We are all going through a grieving process. Chair Norouzi stated that she wants to hear all the ideas and that she wants people to speak up. Even if the Board cannot take the recommendation, conversation does help.

F. Written (and video) Communication Reports

The Board received written and video communication reports.

5. Action Item

A. Program Reduction

President Harden stated that the board and college have been talking about this since September and VP Jackson and his team and have been presenting various



budget scenarios. VP Delaney and her team have been going through program viability. Given that, President Harden is recommending a reduction in force. Vice Chair Cooper stated that he brings this recommendation forward with a heavy heart. These decisions impact people, families, this community, and we have been talking about this for quite some time knowing that these decisions have broader impacts and are not to be taken lightly. These are dramatic and difficult times that require action to ensure that RTC is here for the community in the long run and is set up for the future and what may come.

*After considering the recommendations presented to the Board, Vice Chair Cooper moved to reduce the BAS Application Development Program by one full-time tenured faculty, the Computer Science Program by two full-time tenured faculty, the Engineering Design Program by one full-time tenured faculty, and the Precision Machining Program by one full-time tenured faculty. Chair Norouzi seconded, and the motion carried.*

Chair Norouzi thanked everyone. This is not easy for anyone. Thank you to the incredible instructors who spoke today and shared their stories.

## 6. Discussion/Reports

### A. President's Report

President Harden greeted the group noting that today has been a tough day. There were tenure meetings. Becoming newly tenured is one of the best days, and making these decisions is one of the worst days. She noted that it feels strange to go into her standing report given what has gone on.

Given the national rhetoric, DEI hosted a webinar on immigrants' rights, continuing the goal to educate. Thanks to Doris Martinez, The Be the Place SEP Implementation team continues to meet and has been finalizing strategic indicators.

It's been a busy month for partnerships. President Harden attended a tour of Skills Inc. which does manufacturing airplane parts for Boeing. That same week, the roundtable held an aerospace meeting that educators attended to hear about industry needs. There are many misconceptions about aerospace. Washington state is a leader in STEM positions, but engineering and manufacturing anticipates a worker shortage. Vice President Jessica Gilmore English, Representative Steve Bergquist, and President Harden presented to the Renton City Council who have invested \$130K in Renton Promise this calendar year. Renton draws a diverse business and has a strong tax base. There was a Renton Reporter story about Renton Promise. Career Launch Family night is a partnership with Renton School District. There were about 80 people in



attendance. The Renton Chamber Economic Forecast event included how the economic forecast may impact Washington state.

Enrollment continues to grow and is up 6% for spring and there should be continued increases. Enrollment is up 11% overall and up 20% for tuition-paying. President Harden commented that many of the Board reports discussed retention. The Unity Center is completed. Most of the furniture has been delivered. I-214 has been mostly completed. The next project will be a combined space between the bookstore and student services. OFM will not likely do a mid-year claw back, but there is still support for a re-basing in Fiscal Year 2026. President Harden will visit Olympia in April for more advocacy. The Chamber Board Retreat will be held at RTC.

#### **IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

1. An Executive Session was called to discuss matters relating to agency enforcement action with legal counsel, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (RCW 42.30.110(1)(i)). The executive session was called for thirteen minutes.

The executive session concluded at 4:45 P.M. The Board returned to open session.

#### **V. REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

1. Amendment to Program Reduction Action Item

The original intention was to reduce the computer science program by three full-time tenured faculty. For clarity, the Board will amend the program reduction action item.

*After considering the recommendations presented to the Board, Vice Chair Cooper moved to reduce the BAS Application Development Program by one full-time tenured faculty, the Computer Science Program by three full-time tenured faculty, the Engineering Design Program by one full-time tenured faculty, and the Precision Machining Program by one full-time tenured faculty. Trustee Takamura seconded, and the motion carried.*

- A. Financial/Budget Status

VP Jackson updated the Board on financials. RTC is at about 72% allocation collection, tuition is up which is evident in tuition collection. Fees collected are at 88.2%. Running Start and high school completion collection is 76%. \$19.7M is expended in expenditures. Goods and Services will likely increase for the May meeting for purchasing cut off. Travel is about 40%, which will be increased after NCORE. Financial Aid is low due to an error in awarding, but Financial Aid Director Rahel Weldu is confident in spending down funds. Construction on the charging station replacements is started.

2. Board of Trustees

A. Foundation Liaison Report

The Scholarship Committee has awarded 204 scholarships which is a 12% increase. The annual scholar and donor reception is on Thursday April 24 from 5:00-7:00 P.M. The Fund-A-Dream Campaign allows funds to be matched by the MacKenzie Scott Foundation. The financial health of the Foundation is strong with three times return on investments. 91% of students who were eligible to receive a scholarship did.

B. Legislative Action Liaison Report

This report was included in the President's Report.

C. Community Advisory Committee Liaison Report

A partnership meeting is in the works. Thank you to deans and industry partners for contributing to great work. Trustee Takamura remarked on the tenure candidates' robust industry ties.

3. Meetings

A. Special and Regular Board Meeting – April 16, 2025

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for April 16, 2025 at 3:00 P.M.

4. Adjournment

There being no further business, Trustee Zappone motioned to adjourn the Board of Trustees meeting at 5:22 P.M. Vice Chair Cooper seconded, and the motion carried.

JESSICA NOROUZI, Board Chair  
Board of Trustees



YOSHIKO HARDEN, President  
Renton Technical College

