

Hybrid Special Meeting: Building I Boardroom

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Hybrid Regular Meeting: Culinaire Room (I-108)

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I. STUDY SESSION

1. Call to Order

Chair Jessica Norouzi called the meeting to order at 1:10 P.M. and noted a quorum.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. Strategic Equity Plan Implementation Update

Executive Director Doris Martinez provided an update on the implementation of the Strategic Equity Plan (SEP). Director Lia Homeister and ED Martinez have been leading the implementation task force. Thank you to Communications and Marketing for updating the SEP materials on the website. The Vision, the Mission, and the DEI Statement were all updated last year after being passed by the Board. The Campus Climate Listening Sessions and Surveys helped create the language of the SEP. Student Success (Goal 1), Equity (Goal 2), Workforce of the Future (Goal 3), and Organizational Effectiveness (Goal 4) are all goals of the SEP. The Strategic Indicators, which measure the success of the mission, have been added to each goal. Each indicator is managed by a Shared Governance Council, with annual assessments and new annual targets.

Goal 1 indicators include completion rate, employment rate, and student learning outcomes. Trustee Frieda Takamura asked whether peer institutions disaggregate racial data and noted that she is proud that RTC disaggregates data. Goal 2 indicators are campus climate, racial representations of students, and racial representations of faculty. Goal 3 indicators include advisory committee health and partnership strength. Goal 4 indicators include FTE targets, unit outcomes, and budget alignment. President Harden stated that the indicators focus on alignment because of accreditation feedback. ED Martinez thanked the Accreditation Team for narrowing indicators.

The SEP Implementation Taskforce began meeting in November. Service on this taskforce is by presidential appointment and is comprised of ASG student leaders and members across campus. This group works to bring the SEP to life. The communications team is responsible for highlighting successes and developing a communications plan. The process team is working on a questionnaire that will help Cabinet members meet with direct reports on Unit Plans. The progress tracking team is developing a tracking framework for outlining the SEP priorities as they progress. Trustee Takamura noted that institutional sustainability is key to ensuring enthusiasm for the life of the SEP.

ED Martinez briefed the group on the campus climate listening sessions. The Campus Climate and Data Equity Committee is part of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council. RTC collaborated with Be Culture on the annual listening sessions. These focused on identifying perspectives on findings from the survey, identifying underlying issues related to negative experiences at RTC, identifying actions that can improve experience, ensuring that people feel safe and heard, ensuring that people feel safe enough to share their perspectives, and mitigating barriers to participation. Listening session participation is voluntary and students were eligible to receive a gift card for their participation. Listening session groups included BIPOC employees, BIPOC students, LGBTQ, faculty, students, and all-college virtual sessions. Findings included audit of spaces, faculty professional development, processes for conduct/complaints/compliance that are easy to follow, review of policies, relaunch of the intranet, and workshops and events around collaboration. ED Martinez noted that there has been movement on all the goals, including increased professional development, an emphasis on infrastructure, and more.

Trustee Takamura requested a student trustee on the Board. The group discussed challenges around appointment timing. Chair Norouzi asked about the DEI restructure. ED Martinez stated that the DEI Office and Student Leadership have been merged to facilitate student retention and place a streamlined focus on student professional development. President Yoshiko Harden noted that this was a response to students seeking out DEI. She also stated that the listening session Trustee Takamura said that she is so proud of what RTC is doing and that this is award-winning planning.

4. Student Conduct Code

Dean Anthony Covington briefed the group on changes to Title IX to include federally mandated changes. Definitions have been narrowed, the jurisdiction is narrowed to RTC, discrimination based on pregnancy and gender orientation have been removed, initial sanctions go to a committee, and the parties' advisor is the only party who can cross-examine between parties. Committee members are still required to take Title IX training. Decisions to dismiss a case are appealable and sexual exploitation also falls under Title IX.

5. Trustee Recruitment Discussion

President Harden noted that both Trustees Debra Entenman and Takamura will be sunsetting off the Board next year. This will be a topic at the June Board Retreat. President Harden and Chair Norouzi have also been working on the Community Advisory Committee.

6. Meetings

A. Regular Board Meeting – May 21, 2025 at 3:00 P.M.

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for May 21, 2025 at 3:00 P.M.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, Trustee Norouzi motioned to adjourn the Board of Trustees meeting 2:38 P.M. Trustee Frieda Takamura seconded, and the motion carried.

II. REGULAR BOARD MEETING

1. Call to Order

A. Notation of Quorum

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

2. Adoption of Minutes

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

Trustee Takamura introduced a motion to approve the minutes for the special and regular meeting held on April 16, 2025. Trustee Zappone seconded, and the motion carried.

3. Communications

A. Resolution No. 25-05-29

President Harden noted that in honor of Ms. Michele Lesmeister. Chair Norouzi read the resolution aloud. Michele thanked the Board and made remarks. She has enjoyed working at RTC, enjoys the camaraderie, and looks forward to continuing the legacy of continuing her mother's endowment which continues women's education. Chair Norouzi thanked Michele for continuing her mother's legacy and creating access and opportunity for students.

After considering the information presented to the Board, Trustee Takamura moved to approve Board Resolution number 25-05-29. Trustee Bob Zappone seconded. The motion carried.

B. General Information/Introductions

Executive Director John Henry Whatley welcomed David Sooter. David spent the last four years in the private sector and enjoys being back in the public sector. He enjoys meeting everyone and assisting everyone in their technology needs. Max Reiter recently moved here from Arizona where he worked in higher education. He looks forward to continuing his work here.

C. Correspondence

Trustee Takamura thanked the student group for the AAPI Luau.

D. Public Comments from the Audience

There was a public comment from Andre Betitia regarding the impacts of the Student Financial Responsibility Agreement. Andre asked the Board what they plan to do in relation to the 1% financing charge for unpaid, past due charges; the gaps for non-English speakers; the additional workload for staff; negative feedback received by staff; and the additional barriers to education. President Harden stated that this is a federal and state mandate that relates to public disclosure. She thanked Andre for raising this issue and noted that this is a law that RTC must follow. The State Board has pledged to support colleges in rollout. RTC has an internal group that is working on process. Externally, the deans are working on processes together.

E. Student Leadership

The AAPI Luau featured dancers. There was a good turnout. Mental Health Awareness month has included community movie night showings of Inside Out 1 and 2, a Recovery movie screening, and a sound bath to support student wellness. The Grand Fair is upcoming and will include cap and gown decorations as well as candy leis.

F. Renton Federation of Teachers

Donna Maher, President of RFT, gave an update. The Governor signed the state budget. RFT has some concerns about summer. Summer classes were cut and RFT is looking at gathering resources for faculty. Spring quarter is coming to a rapid end. Faculty are talking about Fall enrollment and would like to carry forward a conversation from All-College Day about how to increase enrollment. Skills-based training is becoming more important.

G. Written (and video) Communication Reports

Thank you for all the work that went into the communication reports.

4. Action Items

A. Student Conduct Code

Vice Chair Tim Cooper thanked the Student Services team and AAG for all the work that has gone into updating the Student Conduct Code.

Vice Chair Cooper moved that the RTC Board of Trustees approve the changes, as presented in the Board materials, to the Student Conduct Code and Hearing Procedures in Chapter 495E-110 WAC, and that these rules shall become effective on May 21, 2025, because these rule changes are necessary to comply with federal Title IX law and related federal regulations. Trustee Takamura seconded. The motion carried.

There is a formal notification process and a public hearing to disseminate this information across campus.

5. Discussion/Reports

A. President's Report

President Harden greeted the group and expressed gratitude to faculty, staff, and administrators across the college. The college has seen success due to collective effort. Thank you for Trustees Takamura and Zappone for attending the All-College Meeting, which focused on the SEP and Foundation Partnership Dashboard. President Harden was a guest speaker at Health and Human Services at Seattle Central College and attended the AANHPI event at the City of Renton.

The RTC Foundation received a \$250,000 grant to expand Mechatronics from PACCAR. Thank you to Executive Director Carrie Shaw and Dean Shannon Matson. This is the largest PACCAR grant that RTC has received.

The All-Washington Academic team and the Washington College Coalition for the Public Good all held events or met this week. Scholar and Donor event was also this week. Campus Clean-Up Day was a big success. Outreach has been busy coordinating a wonderful high school breakfast. The State Board held five forums for a new Executive Director, and a decision is forthcoming.

The Career Fair was so large that it was split between two days this year. Students and community members attended this event, which is publicized around the community. Student Services follows up with a post-survey to ask attendees about their experiences at the fair. President Harden spoke at the opening of Good Vibes Only Barbershop in Renton. RTC was invited to this because Good Vibes Only is seeking to be an active part of the community and help advocate for a strong Renton workforce.

Thank you to Trustee Takamura for attending the Campus Celebration Day, which started with the Foundation's Exceptional Employee Awards, continued with the VPI Best Practices Showcase, and ended with the Retirement Celebration.

Facilities held a listening session about the bookstore and workspaces. President Harden attended a federal policy webinar about risk sharing and other proposed changes to federal financial aid. HB 1587 was signed in Olympia and was co-sponsored by Representative Steve Bergquist. This bill will help public education partner with community. Thank you to Vice President Jessica Gilmore English, Director Rahel Weldu, and Specialist Lidiya Gebre.

The Governor passed the budget, and some earmarks were removed. The Allied Health Building Remodel is now third on the list of major works and is on the 27-29 biennium list.

B. Financial/Budget Status

Vice President Jacob Jackson walked the group through the budget. Revenues are looking strong and RTC will likely spend out 99% of the allocations. \$3.6M was budgeted and \$7.7M was collected in tuition. Running Start numbers will increase moving forward. Enterprise is lagging while food services is still lower than prior to covid. Costs are going up. Travel is coming in. Chances are high that all student aid expenditures will be handed out. Cash and investments will continue to decrease. June and May pay periods always come out of local dollars.

The Building I elevator is scheduled to be completed by the end of this week. The Building J stairwells are being repaired. The Building G chiller is still not functioning and will need to be put on a list of state projects. The chiller is about 60 years old.

The Governor signed the operating and capital budgets. RTC will receive less in capital budgets, so there will be less money for minor capital repairs. Three major projects were funded. If the capital is fully funded next biennium, it's likely that the Allied Health Building will be able to start construction.

The operating budget saw about 1% cuts overall. This amounts to about 2% for RTC, which draws more from certain allocations than other schools. There will be an additional \$350,000 cut that RTC will need to address. RTC will need to pick up 21% of the mandated COLA, which is more generous than numbers for 4-year institutions.

Vice Chair Cooper asked about emergency funds for the chiller. VP Jackson noted that RTC can ask the State Board for emergency funds or could borrow emergency Board reserves. The rough estimate for replacing the chiller is a little over \$1M. The other chiller on campus is about 10 years old, and the Building I chiller was rebuilt in 2018. There are several HVAC units on campus that are 20-30 years old and will need to be replaced.

6. Board of Trustees

A. Foundation Liaison Report

Trustee Takamura stated that she is proud of all the scholarships being awarded. Teresa Woods was one of the employees who won an Exceptional Employee Awards! Congratulations to Teresa.

Tomorrow is the Connell Family Luncheon. Please encourage students to attend. President Harden attended the Dochnahl Memorial event.

B. Legislative Action Liaison Report

Trustee Zappone mentioned that much of the legislative action has been covered previously in the meeting and centered around the Governor's budget.

C. Community Advisory Committee Liaison Report

Chair Norouzi and President Harden met with ED Shaw and learned about the Partnership Dashboard. This is an impressive tool that can drive the mission of RTC forward. Chair Norouzi stated that it's exciting to think about other partnerships and how they can help students. Please forward recommendations for strong pillars of the Renton community who are interested in serving RTC in various manners to Dr. Yoshiko Harden.

Wade Parrott gave an update on Commencement which will occur Tuesday, June 24, 2025 at ShoWare. Student check-in needs volunteers. There will be a DJ this year, a keynote speaker, a student speaker, and the Presidents

7. Meetings

A. Special Board Meeting – June 11, 2025

i. A Special Board meeting is scheduled for June 11, 2025 at 8:30 A.M.

B. Special and Regular Board Meeting – June 18, 2025

i. The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for June 18, 2025 at 3:00 P.M.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, Trustee Takamura motioned to adjourn the Board of Trustees meeting 4:13 P.M. Vice Chair Cooper seconded, and the motion carried.

JESSICA NOROUZI, Board Chair
Board of Trustees



YOSHIKO HARDEN, President
Renton Technical College

