

Hybrid Special Meeting: Building I Boardroom

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Hybrid Regular Meeting: Culinaire Room (I-108)

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## I. SPECIAL MEETING

### 1. Call to Order

Board Chair Tim Cooper called the meeting to order at 1:09 P.M. and noted a quorum.

### 2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

### 3. Board of Trustees

#### A. 2023-2024 Board Self-Evaluation

Chair Cooper opened the discussion for the Board self-evaluation. Based on responses, one area for consideration is Board participation. Chair Cooper noted that he was unable to attend some campus events (item 5). Trustee Norouzi commented that there is much to learn, and it can be challenging to be able to convey the breadth of the programs when she's talking with others. She reported that program visits help her deeply understand programs. Vice Chair Bob Zappone stated that he asked Dean Warren Takata to set up a meeting with apprenticeship programs to get a better understanding of them. He agreed that the program tours are helpful and asked for more program visits. President Yoshiko Harden agreed and also noted that the compressed timeline of study sessions can be difficult. She suggested that programs could present to the Board either during Study Sessions or the regular meetings. The group agreed that this is a good idea. Trustees Takamura and Norouzi requested hearing from more student voices on student experience. Chair Cooper asked to spotlight programs when there are no large business items, such as tenure and annual budget updates. Trustee Takamura asked for on-site visits. Trustee Norouzi asked for an Automotive Program visit. Chair Cooper requested a Welding Program visit.

Vice Chair Zappone asked about supporting fundraising goals for the College. Trustee Norouzi stated that there is an opportunity for the Board to help support the Foundation. Trustee Takamura noted that she would appreciate more relationship-building between the Foundation Board and the Board of Trustees. She would like a better understanding of roles between the Foundation Board and the Board of Trustees. In previous years, the Foundation Board and the Board of Trustees would meet for a meal after separate retreats. The group discussed the functions of the two boards. Chair Cooper stated that the trustees' presence at Foundation events and leading by example may be the

best extent of support the trustees can offer. President Harden suggested that the trustees can attend a Foundation Board meeting to introduce themselves. She also provided some context about the history of the Foundation and Executive Director Carrie Shaw's work building legacy donors and the Foundation. Trustee Takamura expressed appreciation for ED Shaw's decision to bring in Be Culture for help with the Foundation Strategic Plan. Trustee Norouzi stated that she would like to hear what support is needed from the Foundation Board. President Harden suggested that the Board could invite the Foundation Board President and ED Shaw to part of the next Board of Trustees Retreat.

Trustee Takamura emphasized the importance of revisiting the Board policies. Chair Cooper stated that this could be a good topic for the next Board Retreat.

**B. 2024-2025 Board Goals**

**i. President's Draft Goals**

President Yoshiko introduced her draft goals. Some of the goals are a continuation from previous years. Focusing on innovation, campus climate, and strengthening relationships with faculty and staff are all priorities for the coming year.

President Harden noted a widening gap between some student groups that she would like to work to address. She is working on Associated Student Government (ASG) experience and developing a cabinet-to-cabinet annual event. President Harden stated that having more student spaces and developing the student funding hub are both priorities. The Learning Resource and Career Center (LRCC) needs updating due to changes in tutoring necessitated by COVID. Vice President Jessica Gilmore English is working with Lisa Sandoval, Director of the LRCC, on a proposal for the LRCC space.

Financial stewardship will continue to be a priority, as is diversifying revenue streams. President Harden noted that growing enrollment needs to continue and will trigger various changes. The waitlist feature is now being utilized. Executive Director Doris Martinez and Vice President Jacob Jackson are leading the Federal Compliance Taskforce. Workforce development and strategic partnerships are being revived by the Office of Innovation and Strategic Partnerships (OISP), as well as work that President Harden is engaged in around King County. President Harden is also looking at revamping college relations. Trustee Norouzi asked if there is a government relations position. There is currently no government relations employee at RTC, although some other colleges do have an employee dedicated to government relations.

Trustee Takamura stated that she is reassured and fulfilled at President Harden's direction. When the Board hired President Harden, this is the exact direction they wanted the college to go in. Trustee Takamura personally thanked President Harden for her work. Trustee Norouzi stated that it is very fulfilling to be on the Board at this time. President Harden's ability to balance vision with implementation, hard decision-making with empathy and care, and her other leadership qualities such as confidence and good decision-making make Trustee Norouzi feel excited about the direction RTC is going. Vice Chair Zappone noted that President Harden has been engaged in a lot of work. Chair Cooper asked about building and strengthening relationships with staff and faculty. President Harden stated that she would add language around establishing a strong relationship with Renton Federation of Teachers Union leadership. Vice Chair Zappone requested a meeting between the Board and Renton Federation of Teachers leadership. Trustee Norouzi commented that President Harden needs a strong leadership team. Trustee Takamura stated confidence in President Harden's decision. The Board is here to support President Harden, and, in turn, President Harden will act with transparency with the Board.

Chair Cooper asked for quarterly review of items with metrics. Trustee Takamura suggested reviewing Board goals in tandem with a progress review of the President's goals. Trustee Norouzi noted that this will be a good recurring conversation to see if goals are still relevant.

ii. Establish Board Goals

The group reviewed the 2024-2025 Board Goals and discussed 2025-2026 Board Goals. The group agreed that goal one could likely stay the same. Regarding goal two, Chair Cooper stated that the Board has an incredibly strong relationship with President Harden and so goal two is a rollover goal. In discussing goal three, Chair Cooper stated that meetings with Be Culture have been extremely meaningful, and he has referred to his notes from meetings with Be Culture several times. The group then discussed goal four. Chair Cooper noted that the group is in the process of seeking new Board members. Trustee Norouzi acknowledged that the Board is losing two trustees with deep historical knowledge. Chair Cooper added that work ahead of the Board is not only successfully onboarding new trustees, but it is also the successful navigation of these transitions. Vice Chair Zappone acknowledged that Trustee Takamura has put a lot of time and effort into supporting campus community members and helping people feel heard. Trustee Takamura emphasized moving forward and remarked that the Board's responsibility to new Board members is moving the campus to the future. Chair Cooper stated that Trustee Takamura's presence on the Board

has shown students that education can open doors for them. Trustee Norouzi noted that there is a need to align the Board goals with the President's goals to support the President. The 2024-2025 Board Goals are:

Goal 1: Provide guidance for the Be The Place Strategic Equity Plan (BTP SEP) and stay apprised of progress towards BTP SEP outcomes.

Goal 2: Continue to strengthen the Board-President relationship through ongoing communication and transparency.

Goal 3: Continue professional development for the Board and deepen knowledge of RTC's programs and role in the community.

Goal 4: Deepen connections to the community in support of the College's mission to advance Board succession planning and support a pipeline of Board members and friend- and fund-raising.

**C. 2025-2026 Board Budget**

The Board deferred this item until the October regular meeting due to time.

**II. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

1. At 2:31 P.M., an Executive Session was called for twenty (20) minutes to review the performance of a public employee (RCW 42.30.110) in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.
2. The Executive Session concluded at 2:51 P.M.
3. Return to Open Session.

**III. MEETINGS**

**A. Regular Board Meeting – September 17, 2025**

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for September 17, 2025 at 3:00 P.M.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Trustee Norouzi motioned to adjourn the Board of Trustees meeting 2:51 P.M. Trustee Takamura seconded, and the motion carried.

**V. REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

**1. Call to Order**

Board Chair Tim Cooper called the meeting to order at 3:07 P.M. and noted a quorum.

2. Adoption of Minutes

- A. June 11, 2025 – Special Meeting
- B. June 18, 2025 – Regular Meeting
- C. July 24, 2025 – Special Meeting
- D. August 11, 2025 – Special Meeting

Trustee Takamura introduced a motion to approve the minutes for the special and regular meetings held on June 11, June 18, July 24, and August 11, 2025. Trustee Norouzi seconded, and the motion carried.

3. Communications

A. General Information/Introductions

President Harden thanked Trustee Takamura for her 10 years of service to the RTC community. Vice President Stephanie Delaney presented Trustee Takamura with a hand-knit shawl in RTC colors. Trustee Takamura stated that RTC is a jewel in the Renton community and thanked the group for all that they do each day. She will miss all the RTC community members. Chair Cooper thanked Trustee Takamura for being the first person he met as part of the RTC Board. He thanked her for her legacy. Trustee Norouzi shared that Trustee Takamura was the first person she met with as well, and she admired Trustee Takamura's leadership and advocacy prior to joining the RTC Board. She stated that it's been an honor to learn from Trustee Takamura.

Dean Anthony Covington introduced Dr. Ashe Brown, the newest academic faculty advisor. Program assignments for academic counselors are going to be sent out today. President Harden introduced Executive Director Wade Parrott III who is leading the Office of Innovation and Strategic Partnerships. ED Parrott will be leading Continuing Education, the President's Community Advisory Committee, and Partnerships. ED Parrott has been at RTC For 8 years and is excited to venture into a new role.

B. Correspondence

Chair Cooper expressed appreciation for the program review information and noted that there were two retirements of individuals, Mark Daniels and Robert Coggin, of RTC employees of 30-40 years of service.

C. Public Comments from the Audience

There was one public comment from Andre Betita on the Student Financial Responsibility Agreement.

President Harden stated that the compounding interest has not come to the WACTC President's group. The Student Financial Responsibility Agreement is a mandate.

**D. Student Leadership**

Dr. Mica Hunter, Director of Student Life, introduced Odessa Paule, Ruby Pocasangre, Mirella Valle, and Afonso Vaituma, the new Associated Student Government (ASG). There is a full ASG Executive team and ASG Senate this year. Student Leadership took 14 students to the Student Leadership Conference this year. Welcome Back week programming will include tables to help students navigate to classes, Pizza with the President, a Latin Heritage Celebration, and Latin Dancing. ASG welcomes faculty and staff to these events. ASG had a student panel today that helped students connect with instructors on what it is to be a student. It was great to have contact with faculty. Thank you to faculty participating. The ASG wants to make changes for future students and is looking for perspectives to help shape these changes. The first Senate meeting was yesterday. This is going to be a great year.

**E. Renton Federation of Teachers**

Dr. Huma Mohibullah, President of the Renton Federation of Teachers (RFT) gave a quick introduction. Rick Giest and Elisa Westcrook are continuing on the RFT Executive Board (E-Board). Marty Cooksey is the treasurer, JR Hudspeth, Dr. Elizabeth Flannigan, Fatih Killi, and Glenda Hansen are the E-Board.

RFT asked about the state of emergency and pushed for the end of the state of emergency. The chilling effect is worse on those with little protections, such as an unwillingness to participate in certain projects due to fear of retaliation. When asked, Assistant Attorney General Michael Hemker responded that he would need to research how long a state of emergency could be in place, but so long as the conditions are still in place that necessitated the state of emergency it can persist.

RFT stated that there was confusion around Professional Development Day. RFT stated that the agenda was not aligned with state or federal guidelines and may not be in the spirit of what is negotiation. There is a negotiation on tenured faculty counselor lines. Two tenured faculty counselors have been replaced by one none-tenured counselor.

AG Hemker stated that the financial health of the state of Washington is part of what determines whether there is a state of emergency at the college.

## F. Written Communication Reports

### 4. Action Items

#### A. Student Conduct Emergency Rule Renewal

Vice President Jessica Gilmore English presented a request to revise the emergency rule, which are per the Title IX rules. These were first presented in May. Next, there will be a public hearing on October 6. Nothing has changed since the last time this was presented. Trustee Norouzi acknowledged the work that has been put into these changes.

*After considering the recommendation presented to the Board, Trustee Norouzi move to approve the extension, 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 September 18, 2025, because the rule extension is necessary to comply with federal Title IX law and related federal regulations. Trustee Takamura seconded, and the motion passed.*

#### B. President's Contract Addendum

This topic was deferred to the next Board meeting due to time constraints.

### 5. Discussion/Reports

#### A. President's Report

President Harden greeted the group. This has already been a busy month. Several staff were at the City's proclamation for Workforce Development Month. Yesterday was Fall Kick-Off, which highlighted payroll giving and featured a keynote by Dr. Maria Harper-Marinick gave. Employees have been engaged in professional development. President Harden expressed congratulations to the new RFT Board.

Summer highlights: There were 770 graduates at Commencement in June. Trustee Takamura noted that many students stayed for the entire ceremony and Trustee Norouzi remarked positively on the DJ. President Harden stated that last year ended with awareness of two trustee vacancies. Summer was spent meeting with people who expressed interest in the trustee roles.

There was an invitation-only Adam Smith Town Hall event on mental health. The event was interrupted by a protest of ICE that was also in favor of Palestine. There is a protest zone on campus, and the protesters declined to move to the designated protest area. Police told the protestors that they needed to leave if they would not move to the protest zone, or they would be trespass. The

protestors appeared to leave, however two protesters who left returned which is when police arrested them. There is an ask with Senator Murray's Office for funding around Workforce. Currently, allocations and federal dollars are in flux. President Harden met with Loria Yeadon, the President of the YMCA of Greater Seattle. President Harden also met with Suzanne Walsh the new President of City University of Seattle (CityU). CityU uses one of RTC's buildings. President Harden, Vice President Stephanie Delaney, and Executive Director Wade Parrott III met with the Mayor of SeaTac, Mohamed Egal, to help un- or under-employed residents seek education that could allow them to move out of the gig economy. President Harden attended the Convergint Technologies opening, where she collected fund for a scholarship and an individual donation. Kudos to Outreach for creating a welcoming and engaging table at this event.

Enrollment: Summer quarter was a strong quarter at 112% of the FTE target. General Education is up 12%, Prof Tech is up 21%, and CCP is 15% up when compared to last year. Retention strategies continue to be a priority at the college.

Finance: Recent construction updates include the selection of two architects. President Harden and her team have been following economic and revenue forecasts. Slower growth is anticipated.

Partnerships: In two weeks, traveling to Renton's sister city, Nishiwaki, on a culinary partnership.

Trustee Takamura asked how other colleges are dealing with the fiscal crisis. President Harden reported that enrollment seems fairly strong on the western side of the state. Other colleges are reporting some elimination of federal dollars. International enrollments are declining for four-year institutions. Each college was impacted differently and has been advised to address campus-specific issues accordingly.

#### **B. Financial/Budget Status**

Vice President Jacob Jackson gave an overview of the college's financial and budget status. The financial impacts are ongoing. Many colleges waited until after the legislature adjourned in April to begin budgeting. Several colleges are having some very serious financial issues.

VP Jackson briefed the group on where the college ended up last year. Tuition has gone up substantially, Enterprise and Running Start are up. Revenue was

about \$51M. Expenditures came in at or above the budgeted numbers, with a total of about \$51M. The year finished with expenditures being slightly better than revenue.

For August revenue, RTC is trending ahead of what was expected for tuition. Fees are also up due to changes in the fee schedule. Revenue is strong. There is no money to pull from variance this year, and so hopefully the forecasts hold.

The Building I Funding Hub, Building J second and third floor remodels, and Building L remodel are planned for this year. The Funding Hub will be a one-stop-shop for student funding that shares space with the bookstore. The second and third floor Building J remodel will include campus listening sessions, as this will be both faculty and student space. Building L is where NW Carpenters was located for about three decades. Thank you to Maintenance and Facilities staff for all their work cleaning up Building L. HVAC, Commercial Engineering, and space for a future electronics program is being made available in Building L. There will be minor works around campus.

Turning to investments, there are about \$4.2M in bonds. The average yield rate is about 4.08%. The college has about \$20M tied up in various accounts and has less than \$1M available as a buffer. Chair Cooper asked for the best strategies to build a buffer in the long run. VP Jackson will do some research and report back in November.

President Harden stated that the State Board has a budget relations team that is currently in Washington D.C. lobbying.

## 6. Board of Trustees

### A. Annual Board Meeting Schedule 2025—Draft

The Board reviewed the draft meeting schedule. One of the topics of conversation was continuing to engage programs and spend more time out visiting classrooms to help build knowledge. The Board would like to create further connection with faculty and staff. Chair Cooper stated that the Board would love to have program highlights to celebrate work being done.

## 7. Meetings

### A. Regular Board Meeting – October 15, 2025

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for 3:00 P.M. on October 15, 2025.

8. Adjournment

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

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