

**WASHINGTON STATE OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP BOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2020, 1-3 PM, MICROSOFT TEAMS OR DIAL IN
MEETING MINUTES**

The Board of Directors of the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship (WSOS) convened on June 10, 2020 via Microsoft Teams and dial in only due to COVID-19 Governor's Order. The meeting was publicized as available to the public on the WSOS website though no physical location was hosted as the Governor also suspended the Public Meeting Act.

Board members: Miller Adams, Diane Cecchetti, Joelle Denney, Mack Hogans, Jane Park, Gary Rubens, Brad Smith and Mike Wilson

Additional attendees: Lianda Abraham, Terrie Ashby-Scott, Erin Ashley, Jane Broom, Gina Breukelman, Meg Chambers, Kimber Connors, Nikita Fisenko, Karyl Gregory, Mesa Herman, Angela Jones, Louise Kaplan, Joanna Moznette, Brittany Nielsen, Hannah Olson, Cristal Rangel Peña, Stan Pichinevskiy, Jvania Cross Polenska, Dave Stoller, Aileen Tubo, Emma Uman, Steve Walker and Theresa Britschgi by phone

Meeting Called to Order

Brad Smith, the Board chairman, called the Board meeting to order at 1:03 pm.

Approval of Minutes

Mack Hogans moved that the minutes of the March 3, 2020 Board meeting be approved. Diane Cecchetti seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Mission Moment: Scholar Opportunity Story

Joanna Moznette, WSOS Scholar Success Advisor, introduced Nikita Fisenko, WSOS Scholar Lead. Fisenko shared highlights of his background. He grew up as one of seven children in Uzbekistan and his family moved to the United States over a decade ago. English is his third language behind Uzbek and Russian, and he is currently learning Spanish and the American Sign Language. During high school, he joined the TriTech Skills Center in TriCities. As a result of working at a nursing home, he realized his passion to become a nurse. He graduated from Richland High School and is now a fifth-year senior at the Washington State University Tri-Cities College of Nursing. He was thrilled to become an Opportunity Scholar. As a Scholar Lead, he was grateful for the opportunity to be a resource, leader and, most importantly, a mentor to colleagues in the STEM fields. He has taken advantage of WSOS-hosted networking opportunities and participated in study abroad experiences in Costa Rica and Peru. He hopes to become a Registered Nurse and start working in the fall for Kadlec Regional Medical Center. His dream is to complete a Doctorate of Nursing Practice.

Miller Adams asked Fisenko how he became interested in sign language. Fisenko indicated that his community service project in high school was working with those who are deaf and hard of hearing. Hogans asked how Scholars can best be supported. Fisenko shared that the first few months of the COVID pandemic were filled with so many unknowns. Receiving emails and check-ins from WSOS provided much appreciated support and he recommends that flow of communication continue. He also shared how valuable his support from Moznette has been, and he recommends all Scholars get to know their Advisor as he has.

COVID-19 and Program Update

Kimber Connors, WSOS Executive Director, presented the COVID-19 and Program update. Financial awards: Connors reported that FAFSA/WAFSA completion rates are down for college students nationwide due to COVID-19 so a dip in fall enrollment is expected with both the Baccalaureate Scholarship (BaS) and Career & Technical Scholarship (CTS). WSOS has been proactive about encouraging early completion of the FAFSA/WAFSA for Scholars. With students out of school due to COVID-19 impacts, recruiting efforts for CTS Cohort 2 were focused on social media, traditional media and online recruitment.

Scholar Lead program: Mentees and Scholar Leads are being supported in a virtual model. Advisors have increased their outreach efforts to Leads and requested increased engagement by the Leads with their mentees. It is apparent that Scholars are facing significant challenges with meeting their own basic needs during the pandemic. To address this, WSOS launched a COVID-19 resource page on their website to promote support opportunities for Scholars within their communities across the state. Onboarding for new 2020-21 Scholar Leads will continue to be entirely virtual as it has been in years past. The curriculum will be refined based on Scholar feedback and additional support will be given to Scholar Leads to become effective virtual mentors.

Scholar career development: The end-of-year, in-person Skills that Shine (StS) event was cancelled and virtual connections have been facilitated. Efforts relying on virtual methods are underway to recruit 1,000 mentors for 2020-21. StS started with just 15 mentors in 2014 and the program growth and interest has been tremendous. Scholars are facing internship and job-hunting challenges with hiring freezes and work-like experiences cancelled. A career-building resource page has been built on the WSOS webpage to support Scholars with ways they can continue to develop their career readiness. Additionally, WSOS actively seeks opportunities to share with Opportunity Scholars via a LinkedIn private group and direct messaging as part of a growing Industry Insider strategy.

Private fund development: Private fundraising is focusing on seeking multiple, smaller partnerships through grant applications, reaching out to connect with closely held partners, assessing feasibility of the 2020 budget revenue target and launching a feasibility study to test-case messaging and engage donors in the current environment. Additional funding was approved previously by the Board to hire a feasibility consultant. The Finance & Investment Committee just approved the \$50,000 increase to the budget at their meeting last week. The annual Opportunity Talks event will not occur in-person this fall, and a new campaign is being developed to leverage the virtual fundraiser as an opportunity to pivot event sponsors to mission donors.

Mack Hogans noted that the pandemic has impacted every aspect of our lives, including higher education institutions. Many colleges are looking at different models to address the needs of their students. Hogans asked if there are unique challenges faced by our target populations of Scholars, especially those on the lower income scale or those from single parent families. Connors confirmed that many of our Scholars are facing challenges with food and home insecurities. Each college offers its own forms of assistance, and the level of support varies across institutions. For example, UW Seattle has a technology loan program through which students can loan a laptop while many Career & Technical Colleges (CTC's) cannot have such a program due to resource constraints. Some Scholars need a replacement of income because they lost their part-time job with COVID-19. Fortunately, WSOS funding is flexible and includes the cost of attendance such as childcare, food, rent, etc. In addition, WSOS has a flexible leave of absence policy so Scholars can take time away from classes and then resume later. This is important information to share with our Scholars, and WSOS is proactively reaching out to Scholars. Smith noted that higher education institutions are carefully assessing hybrid options for offering classes in the fall.

State match and legislative update: Half of our funding comes from the state, and the state is facing a multi-billion dollar revenue shortfall. The Legislature is anticipating a possible special session. WSAC indicated that the Governor asked every agency to identify 15% that could be cut from their budget in the event that the current budget needs to be amended. Our state match could be included. Therefore, WSOS plans to act quickly on July 1st to secure available state match funds and implementation dollars before a possible special session were to begin. In the case of a delayed match, Connors and Hogans are working closely with the Washington State Investment Board (WSIB) and the Finance & Investment Committee to re-examine our scholarship model and investment portfolio. In light of the budget constraints, we plan to prioritize state match asks for new programs (Rural Jobs Initiative & the graduate program).

Smith noted the Legislature appropriated \$4.5M for WSOS for FY21. He asked if our failing to receive all of that funding would adversely impact our ability to pay out our scholarships. Connors indicated it would not; the only impact would be on the new Rural Jobs program. Given the state of the budget, Smith recommended we consider whether we might make a more modest state match ask in an effort to support the Legislature as they seek potential savings from this budget. Hogans suggested the Finance & Investment Committee discuss the potential impact. He expressed some skepticism that WSOS would later receive the full amount should they not seek the match right away. Smith proposed WSOS vet the approach and noted the state has been reliable in providing the

state match in the past. Diane Cecchetti offered her agreement with the shared comments and strategy as presented. Connors indicated she would debrief with Hogans.

Requested Board action: Connors presented a resolution allowing funds donated by WorkSource entities, regardless of their legal status, be subject to the treatment as defined by law for tribes, counties or municipalities.

Board Action: Hogans made a motion to approve the resolution for WorkSource funds to receive county treatment. Cecchetti seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Connors presented a resolution which would clarify how undesignated funds up to \$500K are allocated between programs and accounts.

Board Action: Hogans made a motion to approve the resolution directing undesignated funds. Cecchetti seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Smith asked Connors to share how WSOS is communicating our support to our Black Scholars given the national dialogue around the Black Lives Matter movement. Connors reported that much reflection has been given to this vital need with the support of staff. There is a statement of solidarity on the WSOS social media page, and we will be highlighting stories of our Black Scholars in the weeks and months ahead. Additionally, we are drafting an email to be sent to all Scholars stating our commitment to standing in solidarity with the Black community. WSOS has supported about 900 Black or African American Scholars since our inception in the BaS which represents 8.2% of that Scholar population. This is double the representation of people who identify as Black within the STEM workforce in Washington which speaks to the critical role WSOS can play in ensuring more diverse voices are heard in the future. WSOS is seeking a response to the Black Lives Matter movement that is authentic to our mission and in alignment with statute. We recognize there is more significant work we can be doing to support our Black Scholars.

Smith noted that people are more focused now on this aspect of diversity. WSOS is an engine of opportunity and mobility for all our Scholars. WSOS has a proven track record for opening doors for more people to jobs. We need to keep dialoguing with our legislators and the public and continue asking ourselves what more we can do. Fortunately, there are many companies in our state who are asking the same question. They can provide internships, become mentors and hire our Scholars.

Jane Park reflected on how much she has learned by working with our WSOS team. She highlighted the extent to which we have included equity goals throughout the organization including the hiring process and onboarding. She has utilized our documents with other start-ups and has found them to be very meaningful.

Career & Technical Scholarship Selection

Steve Walker, WSOS Awards Administration Director, reported the goal of his presentation will lead to a Board vote on the selection criteria for the entire 2020-21 CTS academic year which comprises the fall, winter and spring quarters. He began by providing results of the fall application which closed on June 4th. There were fewer applications over last year for two reasons. First, COVID-19 impacted the ability of champions to connect with applicants and their uncertainty about the future. Second, the number of women applicants dropped this year because WSOS recognizes that the best way for Scholars to land a nursing position is with a baccalaureate rather than a CTC degree. (As such, nursing was not an eligible program during this cycle of application.)

Compared to last year's applicants (CTS Cohort 1), the number of women applicants decreased from 59% to 49%; however, women applicants excluding healthcare increased from 22% to 28%. Additionally, all 49 legislative districts are represented; high school applicants more than doubled from 16% to 34%; applicants of color increased from 43% to 47%; and a new category for single parents was added representing 17% of the applicants.

Selection goals are focused on prioritizing statewide impact in high-demand fields, selecting Scholars who are highly likely to complete their program and promoting equity of access to higher education. Since the application just closed last week, we do not yet know which applicants are eligible. We are asking today for a Board vote on a

selection model which allows flexibility for staff to make slight adjustments to achieve the three identified selection goals.

The proposed CTS selection model includes two changes from last year. First, the proposed model removes GPA from the predictor of success factor because many applicants have been out of school for a long time so it is not a reliable predictor; the model replaces this with the resilience essay. Second, the proposed model would give some additional priority to single parents under equity of access. The proposed model would be as follows: economic impact – 50% (from 45% last year), predictor of success – 15% (from 25%), equity of access – 15% (from 10%) and family income – 20% (remains the same).

Mike Wilson asked for further clarification about why nursing had been removed as an eligible program for CTS. He noted that nursing graduates with an associate's degree take the same NCLEX exam as baccalaureate graduates and have the same ability to practice. There is no difference in the role of a nurse except with leadership roles they can assume with a baccalaureate degree. Walker noted stakeholders had encouraged WSOS to remove the program because BSN graduates find it much easier to be hired than their CTC counterparts. Wilson questioned whether the accuracy of that presumption and wondered if the decision to remove nursing as an eligible CTS program would disproportionately harm students who are more likely to attend a CTC who may also be the neediest. Walker proposed a follow-up conversation on this topic be continued outside of this meeting.

Joelle Denney asked if removing the GPA criteria is just for the 2020-21 selection model because of COVID-19 or if it extends beyond. Walker indicated that the CTS scholarship focuses on applicants who have been out of high school for a while. Consequently, the intent would be to carry it beyond this year. However, given the current environment with COVID-19, this change becomes even more relevant now.

Hogans asked what qualitative differences might be seen over the next four years if we kept GPA as a criteria and did not replace it with the resilience essay. Walker reported that the essay was only introduced last year and therefore no Scholars have yet graduated. Walker explained that the GPA is more about assessing an applicant's ability to clear the selection process with a set of rules whereas the resilience essay assesses the applicants' perseverance and growth as a result of a significant challenge or obstacle they have personally encountered.

Board Action: Hogans made a motion to approve the 2020-21 CTS selection model as presented. Cecchettini seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Graduate Scholarship Program Design

Connors stated that preliminary design ideas for the Graduate Scholarship Program were discussed at our last Board meeting on March 3, 2020. Since then, Connors has discussed details for finalizing the program design with Cecchettini and Wilson, and has also gained valuable input from Theresa Britschgi, the WSOS Scholar Recruitment Director. The vision of the Graduate Scholarship (GRD) is to actualize the intent of HB 2143 by increasing the number of health care professionals providing physical and behavioral health care, particularly in communities designated as rural or medically underserved in Washington state. The goal is to secure a cornerstone partnership to launch the program for the 2021-22 academic year.

Connors reported the program design is based on four pillars. The first pillar targets nurse practitioners because they can address both behavioral and physical health, be trained relatively quickly, have prescriptive authority and are affordable and billable to insurance. The second pillar supports practicum placement in target areas. A practicum is required for board certification and state licensure. While placement in target (rural and medically underserved) areas is challenging, the practicum location plays an influential role in the ultimate placement of certified NPs. The third pillar provides significant scholarship support because NPs face unique opportunity costs and may need to travel to remote practicum sites. The fourth pillar fosters relationships between higher education, practicum sites and Scholars. This pillar leverages our experience and builds relationships with higher education partners and practicum sites.

The program specifics include two eligible degree programs: Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) and Master of Nursing Science (MSN). Specialties include: Family Nursing Practice (FNP), Psychiatric Mental Health (PMHNP),

Adult-Gerontology (AGNP-Primary Care & Acute Care) and Pediatric (PNP-Primary Care & Acute Care). Locating practicums in the target areas is of primary importance. Eligible campuses include Gonzaga, Washington State University (WSU), Seattle Pacific University (SPU), Seattle University (SU), University of Washington (UW) and Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) with representation in Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma, Tri-Cities, Vancouver, Walla Walla and Yakima.

For a typical DNP award, the academic scholarship is up to \$30,000 and the typical MSN award is up to \$8,000. There is a \$2,500 one-time award at the time of enrollment plus \$4,500 per practicum term (120 clinical hours). An additional travel scholarship up to \$1,000 per practicum term (120 hours) is available for those in remote practicum placements. A practicum remuneration of \$3,600 per practicum term (120 hours) is paid to the institution of higher education and then passed on to the practicum hosts (site and provider) to incentivize placement in target areas.

Wilson commended Connors and the WSOS team for building a comprehensive design framework which possesses a high degree of success in placing MSN and DNP students into preceptors in rural communities. Louise Kaplan, Associate Professor at WSU College of Nursing and their FNP Clinical Track Coordinator, stated that she has spoken to Britschgi and believes this program design would be easy to implement for WSU as partnerships with local clinics are already established. Kaplan reported that she was in Aberdeen yesterday visiting three WSU students in preceptors. These facilities have indicated that they prefer to hire from the preceptorships. Kaplan stated that WSU is poised to develop this program with WSOS.

Board Action: Cecchetti made a motion to approve the preliminary program design in anticipation of seeking a cornerstone investment. Hogans seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Connors reported that next steps include seeking a cornerstone partner no later than this November and engaging in 2021 legislative conversations regarding the income/WA high school graduate eligibility change, modifying limiting language that delays the launch and securing the state match for the cornerstone gift. Achieving these next steps will culminate in the launch of the program in the fall of 2021.

Rural Jobs Program Design

Walker reported that the goal of the Rural Jobs Initiative (RJI) presentation is separate board votes to approve the program design, approve the selection model and approve a resolution for RJI giving to be restricted to specific eligible counties. The two-fold legislative intent of the RJI is to increase the number of rural students who graduate with industry-recognized credentials for high-demand jobs in their community and identify high-demand jobs in partnership with local workforce development leaders. The RJI addresses geographic, financial and personal needs of students. Students living far from campus usually cannot sustain a long commute for more than one or two consecutive quarters. Students considering college face unique financial barriers and need someone who can inspire them to believe college is possible.

The proposed program design would: provide a base scholarship support which aligns with CTS; partner with local workforce development leaders to focus on the most accessible credentials which lead to high-demand jobs in remote, rural communities; and provide additional funding to overcome gateway barriers including costs to access a computer and broadband, reliable transportation and paying for required tools.

The proposed CTS-aligned base funding would be \$1,500 per quarter. In addition, Scholars would receive \$2,000 in the first quarter to cover start-up costs such as a laptop and/or commuting costs, \$1,000 in the second quarter to cover broadband access and/or commuting, and \$500 per quarter thereafter for ongoing broadband access. If a RJI recipient is selected for CTS, the base funding of \$1,500 per quarter will come from CTS funds. If a RJI recipient is not selected for CTS, all funding would come from the RJI funds. If a RJI recipient becomes ineligible for the RJI, they would still be considered a Career and Technical Scholar.

Desired key outcomes include the following: select ~400 rural jobs recipients over the next 5 years with 50 recipients in the first year (2020-21) and 85 recipients in each of the next 4 years (2021-2025); support a graduation rate of at least 65%; and encourage +80% of graduates to work in their community.

Walker reported that 205 out of 604 current applicants are eligible by income and geography. 59% are white and 39% are Latinx while 23% are single parents. Most applicants live within 30 miles of campus while approximately 40 applicants live 31-100+ miles away.

The proposed selection criteria include the following: strengthen the pool of eligible applicants by narrowly defining eligible programs; select among eligible applicants by adding the distance from campus to the CTS criteria; balance selects across each region based on their proportion of remote rural residents.

Board Action: Hogans made a packaged motion to approve the proposed program design for the RJI, including the funding implications as they relate to CTS selection; approve the selection criteria for RJI recipients for 2020-21; and adopt the resolution allowing donor restricted giving to specific eligible counties. Cecchettini seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Finance & Program Administrator Update

Mack Hogans reported that the WSOS Finance & Investment Committee met last week and received the financial report from Washington STEM through 3/31/20 as well as the investment update from the Washington State Investment Board (WSIB). Since the pandemic began, Hogans and Connors have been in constant communication with WSIB and Washington STEM tracking WSOS investments. Many of the negative numbers on the balance sheet are more an issue of timing rather than our actual financial status. March was a difficult month for fund performance, but we have seen rebounding in April and May. Asset allocation changes made last fall have clearly benefitted us. Hogans reminded the Board that when they approved the 2021 budget, they included a provision that a \$50K budget increase could be added at the discretion of the Finance & Investment Committee to support development needs. He reported the Committee voted at their last session to approve a \$50K increase to support the hiring of a feasibility consultant.

The Committee said goodbye to three outstanding members. The Committee approved the recommendation of two new members and now seeks Board approval to appoint Elisa La Cava, strongly recommended by Julie Sandler, and Matt Rubright, strongly recommended by Manish Jain and Sandler. Both individuals have expressed a strong commitment to the mission of WSOS.

Board Action: Hogans made a motion to approve the appointment of Elisa La Cava and Matthew Rubright to the Finance & Investment Committee. The motion was seconded by Cecchettini, and it carried unanimously.

Hogans confirmed that WSOS's investments are in good shape. We are well prepared to handle any changes in the market and he hopes the market will continue to strengthen.

Closing and celebrating Mack Hogans

Smith presented one final agenda item – Hogans will be transitioning off the Board and this is likely his last meeting. Smith shared that when Hogans first told him the news, his strategy was denial. Smith reflected on how indispensable Hogans has been from the start. WSOS has seen such incredible progress and navigated great challenges, and Hogans has always been there for both. From clarifying the first program administrator contract, doing contract negotiations with the College Success Foundation (CSF), hiring Naria Santa Lucia as WSOS' first Executive Director and mentoring her with sage advice, bringing in Jane Park and Jane Broom, transitioning away from CSF, recruiting Kimber Connors as WSOS' second Executive Director and mentoring her as well, to chairing and shepherding the WSOS Finance & Investment Committee, nothing accomplished since WSOS was founded has not benefitted without Hogans' active participation. WSOS is so much stronger for Hogans' wise counsel and hard work. Smith shared that Hogans will be greatly missed by all and looks forward to seeing him in the local Starbucks.

Hogans shared his three passions: education, helping young people to be successful and providing access to educational opportunities for all. His involvement with WSOS combined all three of those passions. He thanked all the past and present Board members, Finance & Investment Committee members and staff members. He expressed high praise to Smith for his remarkable leadership. Connors shared her appreciation for Hogans being her #1 ally and always providing honest, invaluable advice. Connors thanked Hogans for remaining on the Board

and Committee until his replacement is found. Each board member shared their own personal thanks to Hogans for his extraordinary leadership and the full reflection of his passions in everything he did.

The meeting adjourned at 3:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Karyl Gregory