

Agenda Items

Information/Action/Presenter

I. STUDY SESSION

1. Call to Order

Board Chair Tim Cooper called the Special Meeting to order at 12:05 P.M. and noted that a quorum was present.

2. Executive Session

At 12:05 P.M., Chair Cooper announced that the Board would convene an Executive Session to review the performance of a public employee and to discuss with legal counsel representing the agency the potential of litigation, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) and (1)(i)).

The Executive Session was scheduled for two and a half hours and was extended by five minutes. The Executive Session concluded at 2:40 P.M., and the Board returned to open session.

3. Resolution No. 24-12-28 Resolution Declaring Financial Emergency

Vice President of Finance and Administration Jacob Jackson provided a review of Resolution No. 24-12-28, which declared a financial emergency in December 2024.

VP Jackson outlined five factors that were considered at the time of the declaration:

1. Projected budget deficits: At the time of the declaration, projected deficits were approximately \$250,000 for FY 2027 and \$943,000 for FY 2028. Updated projections now estimate a deficit of approximately \$324,000 for FY 2027 and \$97,000 for FY 2028, with a projected \$604,000 deficit for FY 2029. VP Jackson noted that the current three-year projected deficit is lower than the previously projected two-year deficit and stated that anticipated program growth and the new state allocation model may further reduce future deficits.
2. Office of Financial Management (OFM) error: VP Jackson referenced the OFM error that was taken into consideration at the time of the declaration.
3. Insufficient college reserves: VP Jackson reported that college reserves have grown over the past four years, placing the college in a stronger financial position than when the emergency was declared.

4. Increased personnel expenses: VP Jackson explained that cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) splits were higher than estimated. Renton Technical College absorbs additional local costs to ensure consistent COLAs for classified, exempt, and grant-funded staff.
5. Lack of funding for high-expense programs: VP Jackson noted that under the new allocation model for priority enrollment based on regional skills gaps, two of the college's most costly and highly enrolled programs—welding and automotive—are not currently designated for King County, limiting the ability to generate additional funding.

VP Jackson stated that the college is in a stronger overall financial position and moving in a more positive direction than it was in December 2024.

Chair Cooper asked whether the Board could reinstate a financial emergency if circumstances were to change in the future. VP Jackson responded that the Board could adopt a new resolution if necessary. Chair Cooper also asked whether the college was past the notification deadline for potential layoffs for the upcoming year. VP Jackson confirmed that the deadline for RFT notifications had passed.

Study Session concluded at 3:00 P.M.

II. GENERAL SESSION

1. Call to Order

Chair Cooper called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 3:09 P.M. and noted that a quorum was present.

2. Adoption of Minutes

- A. February 18, 2026 Meeting Action
 Trustee Cooper introduced a motion to approve the minutes for the special and regular meeting held on February 18, 2026. Trustee Peschek seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Action Items

- A. Tenure Advancements Action
- i. Advancements from Third Year to Tenure
 - (a) After considering the recommendation of the tenure review committee and all other recommendations, Vice Chair Zappone moved that *Olla Ibrahim* be awarded tenure. Trustee Peschek seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.
 - ii. Advancements from Second to Third Year Status

- (a) After considering the recommendation of the tenure review committee and all other recommendations, Vice Chair Zappone moved that *Kristin Ferguson* be promoted from second to third year status. Trustee Peschek seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.
- (b) After considering the recommendation of the tenure review committee and all other recommendations, Vice Chair Zappone moved that *Danielle Perkins* be promoted from second to third year status. Trustee Peschek seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.
- iii. Advancements from First to Second Year Status
 - (a) After considering the recommendation of the tenure review committee and all other recommendations, Vice Chair Zappone moved that *Sharmin Barrera Plata* be promoted from first to second year status. Trustee Peschek seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.
 - (b) After considering the recommendation of the tenure review committee and all other recommendations, Vice Chair Zappone moved that *Aishwarya Fadnavis* be promoted from first to second year status. Trustee Peschek seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.
 - (c) After considering the recommendation of the tenure review committee and all other recommendations, Vice Chair Zappone moved that *Gary Fowler* be promoted from first to second year status. Trustee Peschek seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Cooper thanked the tenure committee members and the faculty candidates for their dedication, noting the deep care and commitment to students evident throughout the process.

B. Resolution No. 24-12-28 Resolution Declaring Financial Emergency

- i. After considering the information presented to the Board, Trustee Peschek moved to revoke Board Resolution Number 24-12-28, declaring a Financial Emergency. The Board hereby declares the financial emergency to be concluded. Vice Chair Zappone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Cooper thanked VP Jackson for the detailed financial overview and praised the administration for navigating the college through a difficult financial period. He acknowledged that many tough decisions had been required and noted that the college is now in a stronger position as a result.

Trustee Zappone commended VP Jackson and President Harden for their leadership, stating that collective effort and solidarity have been critical to improving the college's financial condition. Trustee Peschek reflected on past

financial challenges at the college and recognized the significant work required to move through those periods successfully.

4. Communications Information
- A. General Information/Introductions
 - i. There were no introductions.
 - B. Correspondence
 - i. There was no correspondence.
 - C. Public Comments from the Audience
 - i. There were no public comments.
 - D. Student Leadership
 - i. Student leaders Rue, Ro, and colleagues provided updates, including planning for New Student Orientation on March 26, ongoing hiring efforts for the 2026–27 academic year, and progress on project development initiatives.
 - E. Renton Federation of Teachers
 - i. RFT President Dr. Huma Mohibullah congratulated faculty advancing in the tenure process. She reiterated that ending the financial emergency has remained a top priority and thanked the Board for its attention to the issue and its impact on the college community. Concerns were shared regarding transparency in trustee appointment processes and forthcoming state efficiency requirements. Representatives expressed solidarity with colleagues affected by global events, including the war in the Middle East and immigration enforcement actions, and extended Eid greetings to those observing the holiday.
 - F. Written Communication Reports

Chair Cooper enjoyed the student success gala and thanked Carrie Shaw, Executive Director of the Foundation, and team for all the hard work that went into the event. Carrie thanked her team, the board, and the community members who attended.
5. Discussion/Reports Information
- A. President’s Report

President Yoshiko Harden congratulated faculty who advanced in the tenure process and recognized Olla for earning tenure.

Dr. Harden reported that Trustee Peter Aiau resigned following the February Board meeting and expressed appreciation for his service. She noted that an additional trustee applicant is under consideration, though it is not yet known whether an appointment will be made.

Dr. Harden shared legislative updates, stating that the Legislature completed session and passed a budget. She thanked those who advocated on behalf of

the college, including Vice President Jacob Jackson and Vice Chair Bob Zappone. She reported progress related to Running Start funding language and noted that reductions were less severe than originally proposed, with the potential for restoration pending future revenue decisions.

Dr. Harden highlighted federal funding secured through U.S. Senator Patty Murray totaling \$2.65 million, with \$1.6 million allocated to Renton Technical College to support manufacturing training through a regional partnership. She acknowledged Shannon Matson and Carrie Shaw for their leadership on the effort and noted that this marks the college's first congressionally directed spending award.

She also reported on the success of the Student Success Gala held on March 7, which raised over \$150,000, the most ever generated at the event, and thanked Foundation staff and supporters for their work.

Dr. Harden shared updates from recent instructional program tours, including healthcare programs and Automotive, and congratulated the Medical Assisting program on a successful accreditation visit. She noted being struck by the quality of instructional work and expressed appreciation for faculty, deans, and instructional leadership.

Enrollment updates indicated General Education enrollment is up 13% compared to the same time last year and above the internal target, with Professional-Technical enrollment also up year-over-year. Tuition-paying enrollment continues to increase. Dr. Harden noted that the new state allocation model begins July 1 and that changes in headcount and FTE will have a significant impact on funding.

Facilities updates included progress on the Funding Hub and Bookstore remodel, ongoing work in Building C, and bids underway for work in Building J. Dr. Harden reported additional statewide discussions related to potential financial emergency declarations and explained that such a declaration could expedite faculty reduction-in-force processes at colleges lacking defined procedures.

B. Financial/Budget Status

- i. VP Jackson reported that approximately 72% of the state allocation has been collected to date, with tuition and fee revenue exceeding last year's levels. Running Start and youth high school completion revenues are on target, enterprise revenue has increased, and ASG fee revenue is up. Expenditures were reviewed, including lower salary costs compared to last year, higher unemployment costs related to furloughs and layoffs, and slightly increased benefits and goods and services expenses. VP Jackson reported a projected \$249,000 surplus for FY 2026.

Facilities updates included Building L HVAC adjustments, continued work on the Building C refresh, and planned parking lot lighting improvements using LED fixtures. VP Jackson reiterated the college's commitment to funding COLAs at equal rates across employee groups and noted that additional information on debt service would be provided at the next meeting.

6. Board of Trustees Information

A. Liaison to the Foundation

- i. Chair Cooper announced that Trustee Peschek will serve as the Board's liaison to the Foundation and thanked her for stepping into the role.

B. Legislative Action Liaison Report

- i. Vice Chair Zappone shared that many legislative topics had already been covered earlier in the meeting. He noted the closure of Centers of Excellence statewide and emphasized the importance of engaging legislators during the interim between sessions. He expressed interest in coordinating advocacy efforts with ASG.

7. Meetings

- A. The next Board meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2026.

8. Adjournment Action

There being no further business, Trustee Peschek moved to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Zappone seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 4:00 P.M.