

LOWER COLUMBIA COLLEGE

GOVERNANCE COUNCIL MINUTES

May 26, 2026

Members Present: Brad Benjamin, Shiree Bent, Dana Cummings, Kailie Drumm, Kristen Finnel, Stefanie Gilberti, Wendy Hall, Ashleigh Kruckenberg, Amber Lemiere, Lucas Myers, Dan Ruiz, Nolan Wheeler, and Tracy Powell.

Guests Present: Sunny Liston

1. **Administrative Policies** Policy 227 - Employment of or Teaching Family/Household Members and Procedure 227.1A - Employment of or Teaching Family/Household Members approved by the Governance Council on February 5, 2025, and distributed for campus comment. Due to employee transitions, the comment review process was not completed. The Council approved moving the policy and procedure forward to complete the approval process.

2. **Commencement - Posthumous Degree Procedure 476.1A:** The Council discussed Procedure 476.1A and the intent to award a posthumous degree at commencement. Dan will speak with the family about participating in the ceremony.

The Academic Standards Committee developed an honorary degree policy for review at its next meeting. The Council noted that the honorary degree policy and Procedure 476.1A should use consistent language. The procedure will be revised in the fall to align with the language for honorary degrees.

Commencement will also include a tribute to faculty member Courtney Shah and an acknowledgment of the Nippon tragedy and its impact on the community.

3. **Leave without Pay:** At the May 6, 2026, Governance Council meeting, the Council discussed current budget reductions and the option of unpaid leave for faculty and other employees. After further discussion, the Council determined that Article 709 – Leave Without Pay was more appropriate than Article 707 – Sabbatical Leave and voted to approve Article 709.
4. **Other:** Stef Gilberti, a new Governance Council member, requested clarification regarding the Council's processes, bylaws, and membership representation. The discussion emphasized the importance of hearing diverse perspectives and maintaining a collaborative approach. It was noted that the previous president encouraged broader faculty participation during the 2025–26 academic year. The membership structure may be revisited in the future if adjustments are needed.

With no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.