

MINUTES
Washington State University Board of Regents
May 7, 2026

The Board of Regents of Washington State University (WSU or University) convened in an open meeting, held virtually, pursuant to call.

I. OPENING AND ROLL CALL

Chair Jenette Ramos called the meeting of the Board of Regents to order at 11:30 a.m.

Regents present included Chair Jenette Ramos, Brett Blankenship, Marty Dickinson, Amina Hussein, Tracy Klein, Doug Picha, Lisa Keohokalole Schauer, Howard Wright. President Elizabeth Cantwell was also present.

A quorum was declared.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

The Board of Regents heard from those who requested to provide public comment to the Board:

- WSU student Corrigan Gommenginger, one-time WSU Athletics transfer
- Member of the public Maggie Wisniewska, changes to large animal surgery course
- WSU student Rose Maleki, Student Government and safety concerns
- WSU student Zahra Khodaverdi, Student Government and safety concerns

III. REPORTS FROM LEADERSHIP

A. Report from the Chair, Board of Regents

Chair Ramos reported that the Board of Regents continues to demonstrate their commitment to Washington State University through active participation in meetings, stakeholder engagement, and events that support the university's academic mission, student success, and Cougar spirit. Since March, Regents have represented WSU at a variety of important activities, including leadership and professional development events, the inaugural Global Summit, student access and success initiatives, alumni and industry partnership gatherings, athletic fundraising events, national higher education governance conferences, recognition programs honoring alumni and scholars, athletics celebrations and leadership announcements, and the Student Regent selection process. The Regents will be traveling throughout the state with President Cantwell to participate in the upcoming WSU commencement ceremonies.

Chair Ramos recognized the recent passing of Regent Sam Hunt and honored his service to WSU and as a Regent by reading a commendation, resolution #260507-752.

It was moved and seconded that the Board of Regents adopt resolution #260507-752. Carried.

Chair Ramos recognized Student Regent Hussein's completion of her one-year term and read a commendation, resolution #260507-751, to recognize her service.

It was moved and seconded that the Board of Regents adopt resolution #260507-751. Carried.

B. Report from the President, WSU System

President Cantwell provided an update on university-wide progress, recognizing Regent Hunt's legacy of service and thanking the Board for its continued leadership during a period of significant institutional transformation. She highlighted efforts to redesign the WSU system to respond to changing economic, demographic, and higher education landscapes, including enhanced student retention and enrollment initiatives, a system-wide student success assessment, implementation of a new faculty workload policy, and development of a university data dashboard. Cantwell reported on financial and operational accomplishments, including budget planning, new Seattle workspace agreement, cybersecurity certification efforts, major capital projects, and Moody's reaffirmation of WSU's AA3 credit rating. In athletics, she highlighted the appointment of Jon Haarlow as the Director of Athletics, strategic financial planning, and revenue-generation initiatives. Additional updates included successful state and federal advocacy efforts, improved media visibility for WSU, enrollment marketing successes, expanded research partnerships and funding opportunities, the launch of the President's Big Ideas Initiative, and strong philanthropic support, including major scholarship gifts and another successful Cougs Give campaign that raised more than \$1 million.

IV. REPORTS FROM SHARED GOVERNANCE GROUPS

The following shared governance representatives provided updates on their respective areas:

- Faculty Senate Chair Ken Roberts
- Administrative Professional Advisory Council President Amy Robbins
- Graduate and Professional Student Association President Desmond Aboagye
- WSU Advancement
 - WSU Alumni Association Incoming President Rafael Pruneda
 - Vice President for Advancement and CEO Mike Connell

V. CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Ramos reported that the consent agenda included the following items:

- March 6, 2026, Board of Regents meeting minutes
- WSU Pullman, Southside Dining and Market Renovation – Project Design (Exhibit A)

Chair Ramos asked if any Regent wished to remove any item from the consent agenda to be discussed and considered separately. Hearing no requests, it was moved and seconded that the consent agenda be approved as submitted. Carried.

VI. EXECUTIVE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair Ramos reported that the committee met on May 6 to review one action item and submitted the following for Board consideration:

Board of Regents Election of Officers

It was moved and seconded that the Board of Regents approve Doug Picha to be elected as Chair of the WSU Board of Regents for the year beginning July 1, 2026, and that Howard Wright be elected to serve as Vice Chair of the WSU Board of Regents for the year beginning July 1, 2026, with the understanding that he shall act as Chair pro tempore in the absence of the Chair, with the power to preside at the meetings and to sign all instruments required to be executed by the WSU Board of Regents. Carried.

VII. STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Chair Regent Blankenship reported that the committee met on May 6 to review one information item, the WSU Strategic Pillars – KPI Update presented by President Cantwell.

VIII. ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Chair Regent Picha reported that the committee met on May 6 to review two action items and submitted the following for Board consideration:

Establish a Master of Science in Food Manufacturing Technologies for WSU Global

It was moved and seconded that the Board of Regents establish a Master of Science in Food Manufacturing Technologies degree for the WSU Global campus. Carried.

Establish a Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence for WSU Pullman

It was moved and seconded that the Board of Regents establish a Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence for the WSU Pullman campus. Carried.

IX. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Chair Regent Wright reported that the committee met on May 6 to review one information item, an internal audit update presented by Chief Audit Executive Heather Lopez.

Regent Wright further reported that the committee reviewed eight future action items:

- 2027-29 Biennium State Operating Budget Request presented by Executive Vice President for Finance and Operations and Chief Financial Officer Leslie Brunelli, Provost Riley-Tillman, Executive Vice President for WSU Statewide Campuses Sandra Haynes, and Vice President for External Affairs and Government Relations Glynda Becker-Fenter;
- 2027-29 Biennium State Capital Budget Request presented by Brunelli, Haynes, Riley-Tillman, Becker-Fenter, and Associate Vice President for Facilities Services Olivia Yang;
- FY27 University Budget Approval presented by Brunelli, Riley-Tillman, Haynes, Vice President of Finance and Business Services Matt Skinner, and Assistant Vice President for Budget and Planning Carrie Johnson;
- FY27 Cougar Athletics Budget Approval presented by Brunelli and Haarlow;
- FY26 Cougar Athletics Budget Transfer presented by Brunelli, Haarlow, Skinner;
- Spokane Health Sciences – Team Health Project Approval presented by Brunelli, Riley-Tillman, Yang, and Senior Vice Provost for Health Sciences and Vice Dean for Clinical Affairs Jeff Haney;
- College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences, WSU Creamery Revitalization Project Budget Approval presented by Brunelli, Riley-Tillman, Yang, and College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences Dean Raj Khosla;
- College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences, WSU Creamery Revitalization Project Financing Approval presented by Brunelli, Skinner, and Director of Treasury Services Arthur Whitten.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Ramos reported that on May 6, the Regents met in executive session to discuss with legal counsel litigation or potential litigation, pursuant to RCW 42.30.110. As a result of those discussions, Chair Ramos submitted one action item for Board consideration.

It was moved and seconded that the Board of Regents adopt resolution #260507-753, approving the request for defense of university employees or agents. Carried.

XI. ADJOURN

Hearing no further business, Chair Ramos adjourned the meeting at 1:40 p.m.

Approved by the Board of Regents at its meeting held on September 18, 2026.

Signed Copies Available in the Office of the System President

ACTION ITEM #1 – Consent Agenda

Southside Dining and Market Renovation,
Project Design Approval
(Leslie Brunelli/Chris Riley-Tilman/Olivia Yang/
Romando Nash/Sean Greene)

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS

SUBJECT: Southside Dining and Market Renovation, Design Approval

PROPOSED: That the WSU Board of Regents approve the schematic design for the Southside Dining and Market Renovation project

SUBMITTED BY: Leslie Brunelli, Executive Vice President, Finance and Operations/CFO

SUPPORTING

INFORMATION: The Southside housing and dining neighborhood houses approximately 70% of first year students. The Stanton J. Hall Rotunda dining facility, known as "Rotunda", was constructed in 1961 and was last renovated in 2007. The current facility is 38,958 gross square feet and serves over 2,500 meals per day during the academic year

The highest capital priority for Student Affairs is the renovation of Rotunda to better support the dining needs and patterns of our students and to upgrade the facility for sustained use.

The project is budgeted at \$10M for the first phase of work. Additional phases and timing are under consideration.

Phase 1 includes new gender-neutral restrooms on the southwest side of the building. A new dishwashing area replaces the existing restrooms in the northeast side of the building, closer to the building exit. The existing dishwashing area is replaced with a new Latin food venue that could potentially function as a late-night venue and a temporary Naturals venue. The pizza, salad, deli, and continental breakfast/dessert food venues, located in the center of the building, will be updated with new or relocated equipment and a new appearance.

Project Schedule:

Date	Step
Sept. 2025	Request for Regents Future Action Project Budget Approval
Nov. 2025	Request for Regents Action for Project Budget Approval
Sept. 2025 – Nov. 2025	Design Builder Procurement
Dec. 2025	Design Begins
Mar. 2026	Request for Regents Future Action for Design Approval
May 2026	Request for Regents Action for Design Approval
May 2026	Construction Begins
Dec. 2026	Construction Complete

ATTACHMENTS: Attachment A - Response memo to March 5, 2026 Board of Regents meeting
Attachment B – Southside Dining and Market Renovation Presentation

Memorandum

To: Washington State University Board of Regents

Subject: Response to Board of Regents (BOR) Feedback – Southside Dining Center Renovation Project

Meeting Reference: March 5–6, 2026 Board of Regents Meeting

The project team appreciates the Board of Regents' thoughtful comments and continued engagement regarding the Southside Dining Center Renovation Project. We value the opportunity to provide additional context on elements of the design approach and to share more detail related to acoustic considerations and the integration of WSU branding and campus spirit. The feedback received is helpful in ensuring the project best supports students, staff, and the broader WSU community.

1. Acoustic Considerations and Use of Hard Surfaces

The Board raised important questions regarding auditory comfort and the use of hard surface materials within the dining center. Acoustic performance has been an active consideration throughout the design process, and the proposed approach builds intentionally on elements that have been functioning effectively in the existing facility. Many of the primary materials proposed, such as flooring, wall finishes, and ceiling treatments, are similar to those currently in use and have demonstrated durability and performance in a high-traffic dining environment. The renovation reflects a targeted refinement of the space rather than a significant departure from material choices that have worked well over time.

In addition, the design incorporates specific acoustic mitigation strategies in areas where noise levels are typically higher. Acoustic paneling is included within the servery zones to help manage sound near ordering and food preparation areas. Dining spaces will feature soft seating elements and upholstered furnishings designed to absorb sound and reduce reverberation, while still supporting a variety of seating preferences and dining experiences. The planned relocation of select operational functions, such as warewashing, will also reduce ambient noise compared to current conditions.

As the project advances, the design team will continue to evaluate acoustics holistically, considering materials, spatial layout, and patterns of use, to help ensure the renovated dining center remains comfortable, welcoming, and functional for students during both peak and off-peak hours.

2. WSU Branding, Identity, and Campus Spirit

The Board also noted a perceived lack of visible WSU branding and campus spirit in the materials presented. We appreciate this perspective and would like to clarify that the concepts shared during the meeting did not reflect the full scope of Phase One design elements, particularly those related to branding, graphics, and identity.

Reinforcing a strong sense of place and connection to Washington State University is a central goal of the renovation. This is being achieved primarily through the building's entrances and dining spaces, which are intentionally designed to shape first impressions and support community-building. These areas will incorporate large-scale wall graphics, Cougar-branded environmental elements, custom menus, and coordinated digital displays that celebrate WSU traditions, student life, and shared experiences [see attached examples as design development progresses].

The servery areas are designed with a complementary focus. Rather than serving as primary branding spaces, these areas emphasize the quality of the food experience itself, including transparency of preparation and connections to local and regional ingredients. This approach allows the dining experience to reflect WSU values such as sustainability, regional pride, and student well-being, while maintaining visual clarity within high-function operational zones. However, students will still see cougar spirit throughout this space.

Together, these strategies position the Southside Dining Center as both a welcoming gateway and a daily gathering

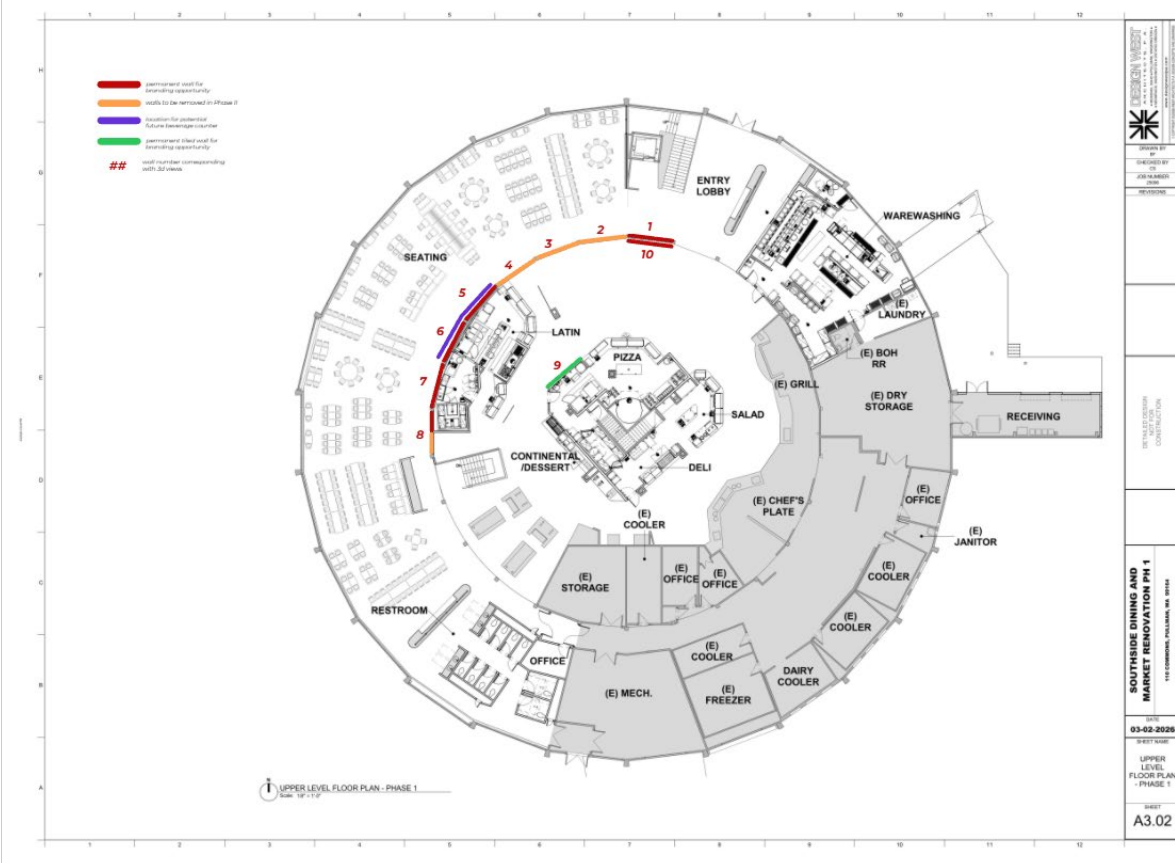
place, one where Cougar spirit is visible, community is built, and students naturally connect. The branding approach is intentional and layered, allowing WSU identity to resonate most strongly in spaces where students linger, socialize, and form lasting impressions.

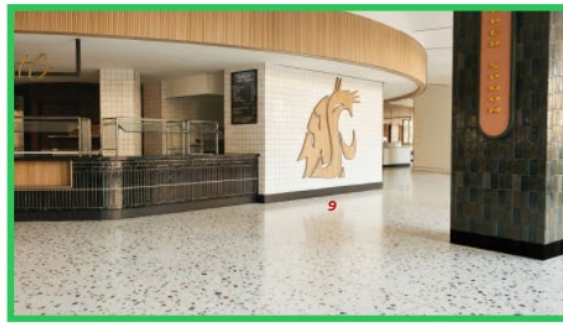
Students remain an integral part of this process. Design concepts, furnishings, and graphic elements will continue to be tested with students to ensure the renovated space reflects their expectations and enhances their daily experience. The project team appreciates the Board's continued guidance and partnership. We are confident that the Southside Dining Center Renovation will deliver a facility that balances functionality, comfort, and pride in the WSU community, and we look forward to sharing additional design details as the project moves forward.

Design Planning

Large-scale Wall Graphics – both temporary and permanent opportunities facing entry and dining spaces. Walls labeled 1-10 in the drawing below are opportunities for branding and community-building graphics.

FLOOR PLANS // PHASE I





Design Planning and Concept Boards

Integrating WSU colors with the server colors.

