

**West Liberty University
Board of Governors**

**Minutes
June 2, 2021**

Attendance:

Jack Adams, Kelly Baker, Michael Baker, Arlene Brantley, Richard Carter, Linda Cowan, Rich Lucas, David McKinley, Stephanie Shaw

Unable to Attend:

Joe Carey, Jamie Evick, Isabella Yakicic

Administration/Faculty/Staff:

Scott Cook, Mary Ann Edwards, W. Franklin Evans, Diana Harto, Angie Hill, Jason Koegler, Jeremy Larence, Roberta Linger, Cathy Monteroso, Joe Rodella, Sara Sweeney, Shemrico Stanley, Ryan McCullough, Amy Baccelliere

I. Call to Order/Roll Call/Quorum and Mission Statement

Chair Lucas called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. and a quorum was established.

II. Introductions

A. Welcome New Board Members

- Arlene Brantley
- David H. McKinley
- Stephanie Shaw

Newly appointed board members were welcomed, introductions made and a brief background was given.

III. Public Comment

None.

IV. Approval of Minutes*

A. Minutes of the Full Board March 31, 2021*

On motion by Richard Carter and seconded by Michael Baker, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the minutes of the full Board of March 31, 2021.

B. Minutes of the Executive Committee May 19, 2021*

On motion by Jack Adams and seconded by Rich Lucas, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the minutes of the Executive Committee of May 19, 2021.

V. Agenda Order

No changes to the agenda order.

VI. Board Items*

A. Election of Officers*

Chair Lucas stated that it was the recommendation of the Executive Committee for the following slate of officers: Richard Lucas, Chair, Jack Adams, Vice Chair, and Jamie Evick, Secretary.

On motion by David McKinley and seconded by Richard Carter, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the slate of officers as stated.

B. Schedule of Meetings July 2021 – June 2022*

On motion by Michael Baker and seconded by David McKinley, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the meeting schedule for July 2021 through June 2022.

C. Annual Graduate Degree Report*

Ms. Sweeney presented the report and graduate level enrollment figures. The first graduate commencement ceremony was held in May and an update was given on the status of new programs.

On motion by Richard Carter and seconded by Linda Cowan, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the Annual Graduate Degree Report for Academic Year 2020-21.

D. Tuition and Fee Adjustments*

Dr. Evans stated the summer fee changes, eliminating the athletic and institutional activity fees for the summer. Also noted were the dental hygiene and RN-BSN program metro tuition rates.

On motion by Jack Adams and seconded by Michael Baker, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the various tuition and fee changes as stated.

E. Update BOG Bylaws-Standing Committees*

Ms. Hooper stated that Dr. Evans discussed the addition of three new standing committees to be added to the Bylaws of the Board; Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Governance. Clarification was given on the number of current committees.

On motion by Linda Cowan and seconded by Arlene Brantley, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the additional standing committees as stated.

Having added and approved the stated standing committees, the Board must approve the updated Bylaws with said changes by a two-thirds vote.

On motion by David McKinley and seconded by Richard Carter, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the updated Bylaws as stated.

F. Notice of Intent for Proposed Rulemaking*

Ms. Hooper stated that in looking at our University policies and procedures, it was noted that there are several BOG policies that have not been looked at in quite some time. The notice of intent is to review all BOG policies to make sure they are compliant with State Code and HEPC Series rules, and in turn focus on University policies and procedures to make sure the internal policies are also authorized. We are required to provide notice to the Board that we are reviewing and updating the policies. This is notice to do that and approval is needed that notice has been received.

On motion by David McKinley and seconded by Michael Baker, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the Notice of Intent for the proposed rulemaking.

G. Combining and Renaming of College*

As previously mentioned and had been in discussion before Dr. Greiner's retirement, Dr. Evans stated that WLU has moved forward with the merging of the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Arts and Communication. We are bringing to the Board this evening the merged college, the College of Liberal and Creative Arts.

On motion by Richard Carter and seconded by Jack Adams, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the combining of the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Arts and Communication and renaming the combined colleges the College of Liberal and Creative Arts.

VII. President's Report

Dr. Evans reminded the Board what the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan and its priorities are about, broken down in five major areas, those goals being academic success, University branding, the student experience, operational excellence and community engagement. Those are the far reaching goals for the institution.

The presidential priorities are enrollment, financial stability, student success, which is what we're about, community focus and alumni engagement. These are the areas of focus these last few months and are still priorities.

When we talk about operational excellence and what we are going to achieve, there has been some restructuring of divisions that will be much more functional across the university. We are not adding any new divisions, but we are quantifying what we already have. With that being said, prior to getting to WLU, there was an advertisement to hire a new diversity, equity, and inclusion officer. It did not come about after I came; the good thing is that Dr. Greiner had wanted to wait until I got here to look at the applications and the committee finished the process. A committee looked at the applications and a new diversity officer was hired and he is here. Mr. Stanley is the Special assistant for DEI and Strategic Initiatives. Most recently Mr. Stanley was in the news because he was interviewed. The next thing you know we were getting phone calls regarding unisex restrooms.

Mr. Stanley gave a brief background and clarification on a recent article in the local newspaper. The newspaper article was very misleading regarding unisex restrooms. We certainly currently have gender neutral restrooms on campus. The article lead people to believe that we are going to change our current structure to gender neutral restrooms. He did make clear that gender neutral restrooms were one of many things we did need to address on campus. Dr. Evans stated that student orientations have begun and we have received inquiries about facilities for transgender students and what are we doing to accommodate their needs. This is the reality of today. We need to be cognizant of our cliental and make sure we are inclusive.

We have some senior level positions that are available; Dr. Brian Crawford has retired and we are in the midst of a search for a new Provost and VP for Academic Affairs. Dr. Jeremy Larance is currently serving as acting Provost, and has been serving as the Assistant Provost. That process is under way and has been narrowed down to three finalists with the first interview being held this week. In addition we will be looking for a new Chief Financial Officer and VP for Fiscal Affairs. Ms. Linger will be leaving us and this is her last board meeting. Attorney Hooper is going to serve as our interim CFO barring any unforeseen issues.

Some facility upgrades are taking place. CMTA is the company in Main Hall with a complete overhaul taking place in that facility and the Foundation is also looking at some enhancements. In order for us to maximize our presence we need to make some changes, so we're doing things effectively and efficiently as well. Dr. Evans commended Mr. Rodella and the IT Department for their upgrades. We are able to really be engaged in the board meetings with the technology upgrades, one of many enhancements going on across campus.

We had four commencements this past spring. They turned out wonderful and we think that the graduates and their families appreciated the face-to-face interaction. There were 406 graduates this spring and the first summer session was underway the week after commencement.

The merger of the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Arts and Communication was previously discussed, and was approved this evening. The name of the new college is the College of Liberal and Creative Arts. Two dean searches are underway in the Gary E. West College of Business and the College of Liberal and Creative Arts. We are also in the process of hiring a Director of Institutional Effectiveness.

The women's softball team captured the MEC conference championship and move moved on to the regionals. This team is not only talented and gifted, but has a cumulative GPA of about 3.5. The men's baseball team was the Division II runner up. Enrollment is down this semester, with some of the courses on line. With so many virtual courses this year students are experiencing virtual burnout. Summer orientations are under way, with the first being held this morning. We are bringing students to campus again, but can attend orientation virtually. The fall enrollment projection according to Mr. Cook, Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, is predicting we are going to have a decline in enrollment. WLU will not be the only one, with a decline in enrollment predicted across the United States. We know we are going to have fewer graduates from high school, meaning fewer going into higher education. Our team is continuing to do everything in its power to recruit and bring students to campus. We anticipate some increases in sporting fields with an increase in students attracted to sports teams on campus.

A portion of CRRSAA federal government provided dollars are going directly to students, and another portion of the funding goes to the institution. Students can choose how they want to use the funding. The good thing about this is that it will ultimately allow us to pay any bills that those students had so the students will have a zero balance when they come back in the fall. We are working to establish and incorporate a co-op experience; for whatever reason co-op seems to be a bad word. We have been talking with business and industry partners willing to invest in our students, give them jobs while they're here, and ultimately employ them once they receive their degree.

The division of External Affairs and Development are insuring that Mr. Koegler step it up, and part of what he is doing is the marketing and communication part of that function. The entire campus is going to benefit from the skills of marketing and communication. Topper Station, which is also our television station, assists with some of the branding initiatives. With regard to the Highlands Center; a lot of work needs to go into that center. We pay a lot of money and we don't want to lose the Center so we're going to revamp it and make a stronger presence. Admissions will have a recruiter on site at the Highlands Center and we will work on community partnership initiatives, along with working with K-12 to assist with dual enrollment initiatives. The Highlands center will take off and we will get a return on our investment.

With community engagement there has been a lot of talk about where do we go with COVID-19. On a recent call with other presidents it appears institutions are doing their own thing. WLU will not be making any changes through July 1st; we will continue to wear masks, etc., since we are still unsure of many of the requirements. Examples of what sister institutions are doing is having those who have been vaccinated wear a lanyard or card to move about without a mask. With no lanyard you have to wear a mask; if you leave your lanyard at home you wear a mask, visitors as well. WVU has outlined its plan but it is not complete.

Alumni emphasis is still very important and we're getting out and meeting to establish those alumni chapters we once had. We're also working with local, state, and national officials on any issues relating to higher education with Mr. Koegler, VP of External Affairs. We will also be working with K-12 education; it is so important that we work with our K-12 partners. We want to be that bridge, that they already know about West Liberty University and want to attend. It's too late when they're senior's; we need to get to the elementary schools and plant that seed. We have some campus outreach initiatives to get young people on campus.

Homecoming 2021 will be held in person on October 16, 2021.

VIII. Reports

A. Interim Provost (Larance)

Dr. Larance, Interim Provost, Assistant Provost for Academic Innovation and Strategic Planning, noted that it was a great year and probably the most challenging year in the history of higher education. He stated he could not say enough about how amazing our faculty and students were this year. Professors who had never sent a text before were suddenly posting videos on Topper Station. We were forced to do things he had been wanting people to do for so long, and coming away people are excited. We came out of the pandemic stronger.

Five professors were promoted to assistant, three to associate, and four to full professor. We are in the process of hiring a Director of Institutional Research to replace Paula Tomasik. Faculty contracts are going out by June 10th, where they normally don't go out until July, thanks to Maureen Golick.

We are in the planning stages on a proposal for a Data Science major. As previously mentioned the Masters of Arts Therapy is at the HLC right now and should be approved in the next couple weeks. We received a fantastic report on the proposal for the Masters in Speech Language Pathology as it moves forward. Nursing will have a an accreditation site visit in the fall.

B. Enrollment (Cook)

Mr. Cook stated that we are behind in enrollment, which has not been the case in recent years. WLU had a seven year increase in enrollment and even this past year we were still only down six students in the fall and up in spring enrollment. Although we are down about 104 students right now, we picked up 81 freshmen in the last three weeks. We are up in graduate applications and housing numbers, so we are headed in the right direction. The State of West Virginia is down 50% in graduates from high school.

C. Staff (Baker)

Ms. Baker stated that she had no report, but on behalf of herself and the staff, thanked Dr. Evans for granting funding for an employee picnic. There are approximately 100 people signed up for the picnic. Employees are excited and thanked Dr. Evans again for his hard work.

D. Faculty (Cowan)

Dr. Cowan presented a list of many faculty accomplishments, stating there are 148 full-time faculty members at WLU. Her report was followed by a Faculty Senate update from Mr. Ryan McCullough.

As Chair of Faculty Senate, Mr. Ryan McCullough followed up with a brief report. Their goal is to promote shared governance between the administration, board, and faculty. Senators have a two-year term, having recently finished their first year. The Senate is considering changing term limits. When recently asked for concerns from faculty there were less than 10 responses.

E. SGA (Yakicic)

None.

F. Information Technology (Rodella)

Mr. Rodella thanked Dr. Evans for the opportunity to present his annual report to the Board, noting the mission of the University IT Department. He stated it was impressive how the faculty pivoted in a time of need and did a fabulous job pivoting to that technology. Mr. Rodella reviewed the many accomplishments of the Information Technology Department.

Students benefit dramatically by being able to review classes. Even if we are back in the classroom in the fall, to continue to record classes would be beneficial; not all learners learn in the exact same way.

A backup and disaster recovery system was rolled out that allows staff and faculty to safely secure encrypted data, which is backed up off site. The SharePoint intranet site gives all departments the opportunity to share documents to collaborate and define their own security parameters inside their SharePoint sites. At this time not all departments have access to SharePoint, but everyone will eventually have access.

The department has worked hard on governance and a newly adopted acceptable use policy, with two other policies in the pipeline for privacy and data breach response. In the coming year work will begin on a new email policy, working to separate faculty and staff from students, alumni and retirees. Unfortunately, since the inception of email it is to put everybody in the same bucket, which creates some issues. We will be finalizing a technology plan and working on IT assessment and improvement.

The world of cyber security has exploded and we need to react to that, and believe we have. Mr. Rodella reviewed their goals for FY22 of various upgrades and enhancements and continued work on governance. In closing has praised his staff for their dedication and appreciates their fabulous work.

IX. Finance Report

Ms. Linger noted that this will be her last meeting as she is moving to the University of Arizona. She reviewed the budget status report as of May 2021, with one more month before the end of the fiscal year. On the revenue side we have collected/earned so far \$37 million, or 99.6% of the adjusted budget target. All items on the revenue side have met or slightly exceeded adjusted targets, although room and board have fallen behind. The expense side of personal services and fringe benefits are running about 3% over expected, with some savings in utilities. Due to special pandemic cleaning early on, contractual services are running a little over, which was expected. We could see a first time budget deficit of \$600,000, which is between 1-2%. Cash wise we are in a good position, but getting a handle on expenses will need to be addressed over the coming year.

X. Information Gathering

Dr. Evans again welcomed the new board members and noted that he will be circulating to members a standing committee skills alignment form, asking for input from members. Board members should have received information for training taking place next week. This training is state mandated.

XI. Next Meeting Date – Wednesday, August 18, 2021

XII. Adjournment

On motion by Jack Adams and seconded by Richard Carter, the meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Richard Lucas _____
Chair

Jack Adams _____
Secretary