

**West Liberty University
Board of Governors**

**Minutes
March 31, 2021**

Attendance:

Jack Adams, Kelly Baker, Michael Baker, Richard Carter, Linda Cowan, Jamie Evick, Rich Lucas, Isabella Yakicic

Unable to Attend:

Joe Carey

Administration/Faculty/Staff:

Scott Cook, Brian Crawford, Mary Ann Edwards, Matthew Harder, Diana Harto, Angie Hill, Jason Koegler, Jeremy Larance, Roberta Linger, Cathy Monteroso, Joe Rodella, Sara Sweeney, Ron Witt

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

None.

III. Public Comment

None.

IV. Agenda Order

No changes to the agenda order.

V. Approval of Minutes*

A. Minutes of the Full Board February 3, 2021*

On motion by Jack Adams and seconded by Richard Carter, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the minutes of the full Board of February 3, 2021.

B. Minutes of the Executive Committee March 17, 2021*

On motion by Richard Carter and seconded by Mike Baker, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the minutes of the Executive Committee of March 17, 2021.

VI. Board Items for Approval*

A. Program Reviews*

Dr. Crawford stated that the request for program review are for Chemistry, Creative Art Therapy, Elementary and Secondary Education, Psychology, and Visual Communication Design. Per HEPC policy, all academic degree programs participate in a five-year review process that monitors mission, curriculum, resources, student learning outcomes, productivity standards, etc. The University Assessment and Accreditation Committee and the Provost are responsible for evaluating program review documents and for making recommendations.

On motion by Mike Baker and seconded by Linda Cowan, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the five-year program reviews as stated, and recommend continuation of the programs at the current level of activity.

B. CMTA Project Bond*

Ms. Linger stated that the University is seeking approval of the CMTA project bond for upgrades to Main Hall this summer on the HVAC. There are three documents in the board packet for approval; the bond information and lease purchase agreement. The reimbursement resolution basically states that if WLU incurs expenses prior to the bond closing, we can reimburse ourselves for those expenses out of the bond proceeds. The other bond basically states the University will pay for the project.

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 CMTA Project Bonds.

A discussion followed with regard to the Equipment Lease/Purchase Agreement being reviewed by the office of the WV Attorney General. It was recommended to approve the Lease, subject to the addition of bank handling the bond and any changes from the Attorney General's office.

On motion by Mike Baker and seconded by Richard Carter, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the Equipment Lease/Purchase Agreement as stated above.

C. FY 2022 Budget/Tuition & Fees*

Ms. Linger stated that the budget assumptions include a 4% decrease in undergraduate enrollment, 2% decrease in housing, a capital fee increase of \$55/per semester, 3.5% increase in undergraduate tuition, 8% increase in graduate enrollment, 2% increase in graduate tuition, and the state appropriation remaining at \$9.1 million. Based on the reviewed assumptions \$43.5 million will be used to create and put together a detailed budget, which the campus will use to budget their expenses. It was noted that this information was presented line item by line item to the Finance Committee.

Ms. Linger stated that the FY tuition and fees include the fall 2021 through summer of 2022 and reviewed the various increases. A brief discussion followed with regard to building leases and whether there will still be only single occupancy of rooms.

On motion by Kelly Baker and seconded by Jamie Evick, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the FY 2022 Budget/Tuition and Fees.

VII. Reports

A. Provost (Crawford)

Dr. Crawford distributed a list of programs and changes for next fall, and gave an update on the various new, waiting for approval, and closing programs. A discussion followed with regard to the School of Professional Studies and the closing of some programs. Also discussed was the lease for the Highlands Center and the number of classes offered at the site. It was stated we do not anticipate keeping the School of Professional Studies.

B. Enrollment Update (Cook)

Mr. Cook stated that we continue to have an increase in enrollment with 2,286 current students. Compared to last semester we have a 3.5% increase in students, with our largest gain in graduate, early entrance high school, and transfer students. With high school students returning to the classroom there is an increase in admission events. The first on-campus event information for April 30 rolled out last night and 17 students had already signed up this morning. In-person summer orientation programs will take place with smaller groups and limited numbers. Getting students to campus has always been key; we have a great chance of keeping them here if we get them to campus. Registration for current students will begin Monday and we'll see where we're trending for next fall. Although there was no in-person commencement last year, we plan to have in-person ceremonies this spring. There will be five ceremonies; May 7th for Masters, three ceremonies on May 8th for undergraduate, and June 11th for Physician Assistant. Music, along with other sections of the ceremony will be recorded and students will be limited to two guests. Following COVID guidelines we are confident we will be able to hold ceremonies and invite the 2020 graduates who wish to walk.

C. Staff (Baker)

Ms. Baker noted that the staff would like to relay their concern about the possibility of Bluefield State College opening a branch in Wheeling, and that it can and may have a direct effect on enrollment and employment at West Liberty University.

D. Faculty (Cowan)

Dr. Cowan had no report, but was open for questions.

E. Student Government (Yakicic)

Ms. Yakicic recently met with Dr. Evans and some members of President's Cabinet. She stated that due to COVID, students feel there is nothing going on and nothing to do on campus. Student Government has planned activities for Dead Week on the quad, which includes food trucks.

Elections will be coming up for a new SGA president and vice president. She thanked the Board and will miss it after serving the past two years.

VIII. President's Report

President Evans noted as a reminder, that the Strategic Plan core priorities consist of demonstrating academic success and plans to continue to focus on this area. We continue to place an emphasis on University branding, strengthen community engagement, as well as ensuring operational efficiency and excellence, and enhancing the student experience. When students leave WLU we want them to tell others how wonderful their experience was and take that into their community. Others will hear about their experience and want to have a similar experience by coming to WLU. We want to recruit and retain students; give them a holistic experience so they will want to come back.

As part of the presidential priorities, enrollment is the driving force, whether we acknowledge it or not; with no students we cannot survive. The financial stability priority is to end up in the black and hope to have a few more dollars as the end of the fiscal year. Student success and community focus are both a constant and equally important. Alumni engagement is one of those priorities we want to bring back and revitalize. Dr. Evans stated he talked with two alums this week who stated they had not given because no one had asked; it's not the first time he's heard that statement. We need to let them know their importance and their value to the institution.

In academic matters, Dr. Evans stated that in the 2021 U.S. News & World Report, WLU was ranked #68 as Best Regional University in the South and #10 as Best Regional University in the South for Social Mobility. Teaching Degree Search rated WLU 2021 Best WV School for Affordable Master's in Teacher Education Grade Specific and #42 top Bachelor's in Elementary Education by Study.com. We have received official notification from the HLC that they approved WLU's request for a Master of Science in Exercise Physiology, and the HEPC has approved the Bachelor of Arts in Music degree.

With regard to student engagement, spring commencement ceremonies will be held May 7, 8, and June 11, 2021. The wrestling and men's basketball teams have gone on to national honors, with Coach Irwin's team placing #4 in the nation and men's basketball going to the Elite 8. Five acrobatics and tumbling student athletes have received NCATA National Player of the Week honors in the past two weeks. They lost their most recent match by one point to Fairmont, who is ranked No. 1. The first track and field event in many decades will be held this weekend at WLU, along with a football game.

There are fundraising initiatives taking place and Dr. Evans' applauded the efforts of the WLU Foundation. \$1.5 million has been raised to date, putting them 17% ahead of where they were in 2019. February's giving was \$150,000, the largest in the last five-years for February. March was another banner month with \$270,000, the second largest March in the last five-years. WesBanco's gift of \$100,000 for an endowed professorship is the first of its kind at WLU, and tomorrow is our Day of Giving. Dr. Evans' hope is to see 100% cabinet participation, along with 100% Board participation. It is good to go out into the community and be able to say that 100% of the Board give to the University. We are hoping to boost the number for employee giving, which is currently at 20%. No gift is too small, even for students, and we hope to do a better job instilling in them a spirit of philanthropy, knowing it's important to give back.

Congressman McKinley was on campus with President Evans and other members of the University and a virtual meeting with Senator Capito went well. IT is currently rolling out a shared point to multiple departments for document storage and collaboration. Filtered water stations across the campus are being installed by the Physical Plant.

Founder's Day is today, with a video sent to the campus community which includes a message from President Evans, the University singers, and a reading from West Virginia Poet Laureate Mark Harshman. This Friday, Good Friday is a holiday and the campus will be closed, and April 30th will be the last day of classes.

Dr. Evans stated that before making a decision on the merger of the Colleges of Arts and Communication and Liberal Arts he wanted to have a conversation with each college. The conversations took place, feedback was provided, questions were asked, and the decision has been

made to move forward with the merger of those two colleges. The focus will be to strengthen the financial capacity of that one college. This will be an opportunity to redesign, restructure and be a more impactful college that meets the student's needs.

Dr. Evans discussed the issues surrounding the MOU the Wheeling City Council and Mayor have signed with Bluefield State College. The engineering program Bluefield is offering has not yet been approved by the HEPC. The Board voted to draft a letter supporting President Evans' position on this matter. Mr. Baker asked if a letter was warranted, to which Dr. Evans stated that he was "already out on the ledge" and anything we would decide as a Board would be welcomed. Mr. Baker stated that "if he's out on the ledge, I'm going with him." Dr. Evans noted there is a process Bluefield State has to go through with the WV Higher Education Policy Commission. If the process moves forward there will be an opportunity to voice concerns to the State.

On motion by Richard Carter and seconded by Rich Lucas, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to draft a letter in support Dr. Evans and his position on the Bluefield State College Memorandum of Understanding.

Dr. Evans noted that we have several vacancies on the Board and took it upon himself to reach out to persons who have been nominated, those being:

- Ms. Arlene Brantley – Account Executive with Google Cloud
- Dr. Katie L. Kacmarik – Pharmacist with Moundsville Pharmacy
- Mr. Thomas A. Cervone – Theatre Program Director at University of TN
- Mr. David H. McKinley – President & CIO at McKinley Carter Wealth Services
- Ms. Stephanie Shaw – Vice President of Enterprise Technology at The Wendy's Co.

A brief discussion followed about the process and Dr. Evans' three B's: Bring us students, bring us money (donate yourself, talk with your friends), or bring us your resignation for replacement on the Board. Ultimately, the Governor makes the decision on the appointments.

Dr. Evans discussed amending the bylaws of the Board and suggested other standing committees. Three additional committees were discussed, those being Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Governance. This also serves as notification for the next meeting for approval of such amendments. Chair Lucas stated that he will talk with Ms. Hooper about the Bylaw changes. This concluded the president's report; Dr. Evans asked for questions.

Ms. Baker asked about the nominees for the board vacancies, stating she had submitted Dr. John McCullough to Chair Lucas. Dr. Evans was aware of the nomination and had discussed it with Mr. Lucas. A brief discussion followed with regard to board members living out of the area.

Mr. Baker asked how WLU is doing with COVID and the vaccination protocol. Mr. Cook stated that we are testing weekly, every Tuesday, and have had a run of four weeks without a positive case. There were two positive cases this week, resulting in the quarantine of an entire athletic team. The HEPC has asked us to survey students today, and all employees who were interested have been vaccinated. A brief discussion followed.

IX. Finance Report

Ms. Linger gave a finance update as of February 28, 2021; March is not yet complete. Overall revenue is at 87% of what was budgeted. We will receive our last allotment of \$3 million from the state tomorrow and graduate tuition revenue should increase as well. Overall we did adjust the budget after approval last year and so far we're doing well with revenue. Expenses, except for personal services/benefits/professional services, are under benchmark. Personal services are at about 72% running a little over with the additional custodial services in house and some other issues. We are confident we will end the year on the positive side of the budget.

A brief discussion followed with regard to Dr. Evans moving into the president's home. He will be unpacking, though the house needs some fine tuning.

X. Information Gathering
None.

XI. Next Meeting Date – Wednesday, June 2, 2021

XII. Adjournment
The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Richard Lucas _____
Chair

Jack Adams _____
Secretary