

**West Liberty University  
Board of Governors**

---

**Minutes  
December 8, 2021**

Attendance:

Michael Baker, Arlene Brantley, Richard Carter, Thomas Cervone, Jamie Evick, Ryan Glanville, David McKinley, Jason Metz, Stephanie Shaw

Unable to Attend:

Jack Adams, MacKenzi Jones, Rich Lucas

Administration/Faculty/Staff:

W. Franklin Evans, Phillip Carl, Scott Cook, Aaron Crall (CLA), Mary Ann Edwards, Diana Harto, Angie Hill, Lori Hudson, Jason Koegler, Sean Ryan, Tammi Secrist, Shemrico Stanley, Bonnie Suderman, Lynn Ullom, Joe Rodella

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

Secretary Evick called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. with a motion by Michael Baker and seconded by Richard Carter, followed by a roll call taken of members.

**II. Introductions**

**A. FY21 Audit Report – CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP**

Ms. Hudson introduced Aaron Crall with CLA, who reviewed the West Liberty University financial statement, noting that Nancy Gunza has retired. Mr. Crall stated that the financial statement audit is 100% complete and issued. The audit was due and completed on October 15, 2021, noting this is a positive report to deliver. Mr. Crall complimented Ms. Hudson and Ms. Hooper for their preparedness for the audit with the many transitions in the accounting department.

Mr. Crall noted the responsibilities in the financial statement audit. The Board's role is oversight of the audit process. The finance team has the responsibility of preparing the financial records according to policy and internal controls. The auditor's responsibility is limited to doing testing and providing an opinion on the accuracy of the financials. The financial statements are WLU's; the auditor's express opinion of these statements. The WLU Foundation is included as a discretely presented component unit, but they have separate auditors perform their audit. Internal controls were evaluated, and no issues were uncovered or errors to be corrected. No material weaknesses were identified. There were no questions for the auditor.

**III. Public Comment**

None.

**IV. Agenda Order**

No change to the agenda order.

**V. Approval of Minutes\***

**A. Minutes of the Full Board October 13, 2021, October 20, 2021, November 3, 2021\***

**On motion by Richard Carter and seconded by Stephanie Shaw, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the minutes of the full Board of October 13, 2021, October 20, 2021, and November 3, 2021.**

**VI. Board Items for Approval\***

**A. Audit\***

**On motion by Stephanie Shaw and seconded by Richard Carter, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve submission of the Fiscal Year 2021 audit report.**

**B. Honorary Degree – David R. Croft\***

Dr. Evans stated that a committee composed of five individuals, with the provost leading the charge, along with representation from faculty, staff, students, and External Affairs, recommended to the President that an honorary degree be awarded to WLU's commencement

speaker, attorney David R. Croft, the Doctor of Humane Letters. Dr. Evans asked that the board accept the recommendation and resolution for Mr. Croft to receive an honorary degree.

**On motion by Richard Carter and seconded by Michael Baker, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to authorize the conferral of an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters (DHL) degree from West Liberty University at the December 2021 commencement to David R. Croft.**

**C. Updated Mission Statement\***

Dr. Evans noted that the board had been made aware that the University is going through a reaffirmation process; one that requires we show documentation that our current mission statement is reviewed and approved. It was the sentiment of the Governance Committee to take a very careful look at the current statement. A taskforce of individuals across the campus comprised of deans, faculty, staff, students, and administration brought forward what the board has in front of them.

The current Mission Statement reads: *To provide our students the opportunity for a high-quality undergraduate, graduate, and professional education through appropriate forms and venues.*"

The proposed Mission Statement reads: *West Liberty University, established in 1837, was the first institution of higher education in West Virginia. Today, we are a dynamic, inclusive, student-centered community that cultivates scholarly exploration, experiential learning, creative expression, and global citizenship.*

*WLU is a public university committed to providing students with a comprehensive education from undergraduate to advanced degrees while serving as the region's leading advocate for educational attainment, the arts, research, and economic opportunity."*

The proposed statement was sent out across campus on Monday in a survey format and we did receive input; 175 participated with 69% responding in agreement with and 33% against. The survey was shared with the Executive Committee today. The taskforce is willing to go back to tweak this statement. A discussion followed about the Mission Statement.

**On motion by Michael Baker and seconded by Richard Carter, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the revisions to the Institutional Mission Statement.**

**D. Board of Governors Self-Evaluation Document – Informational**

Dr. Evans stated that this document was discussed during the Governance Committee meeting. As we prepare for accreditation, the idea is that our BOG does its own type of assessment of its work and purpose. Samples were provided to the Committee, and it recommended this particular instrument, found on pages 18-19 of the Board packet. An electronic version will be sent to the board after the meeting. The information provided will be tabulated and ready before the next board meeting.

**VII. President's Report**

Dr. Evans noted the five core priorities for WLU; demonstrate academic success, emphasize University branding, strength community engagement, ensure operational excellence, and enhance student experience. Everything WLU does is supposed to emanate from those five things. The presidential priorities are enrollment, financial stability, student success, community focus and alumni engagement.

With regard to Academic Affairs, commencement is Saturday, December 11, 2021 at 11:00 a.m., with only one ceremony for graduate and undergraduate students. The faculty-Staff Institute will be January 5, 2022 opening the new semester and provide information to faculty and staff on what will occur in the semester. Classes begin on January 8<sup>th</sup>, but the majority of campus classes start on January 10<sup>th</sup>. The HLC accreditation self-study is due in the spring, and we now have a new accreditation liaison, Dr. Ann Saurbier. She is an expert in the field of accreditation, particularly HLC, and we are fortunate that she is now going to serve as the liaison. We have an updated mission statement, having looked at our vision and particularly at some of the goals. As Trustee Shaw mentioned, we need to make sure everything is aligned appropriately and correctly so the vision and everything else emanates from our mission statement. As the new semester begins, we have

another group looking at the strategic plan. Faculty, staff, students, and the Board will be involved in the process. They will look at what was created some years ago, and in light of the new revised mission statement, to make sure what we have is appropriate and meaningful. The provost search ended up being a failed search. We want to make sure the provost we select is someone who will bring value to the institution. There were 35 applicants who met the criteria with many eliminated who were asking for more money than we pay. Applicants did not move forward in the process if they were asking for \$180,000 to \$200,000. Dr. Suderman has worked tremendously as our Chief Academic Officer. We have MOU's between many institutions and agencies, particularly our sciences with MOU's with hospitals and clinics. The College of Education and Human Performance MOU's are with athletic trainers, and most recently the Gary E. West College of Business and graduate studies joining with Pittsburgh Technical College so their graduates can ease into our masters program. Dr. Saubier and Dr. Mumford have been working with the administration at Pittsburgh Technical College on the MOU. Ohio Valley University is going to be closing. The Chancellor made us aware that they have lost their accreditation. They have not paid ELusion in seven years and are unable to provide transcripts to anyone. The HEPC meets Friday to make the final determination. Ohio Valley University is a private church related school.

Student Engagement and Mr. Cook's team have met and WLU will start the spring semester with a mask mandate, as we are all aware of the new COVID variant OMICRON. Initially, we were going to hold testing of individuals who have not provided vaccine information but will now test on a case-by-case basis as issues arise. Mr. Cook will share more details. Fall enrollment is down and Mr. Cook will talk about some of the initiatives being planned to boost enrollment. Men and Women's basketball are underway, as well as wrestling, acrobatics and tumbling will begin in February, and the indoor track and field has already started. With residence life we are bringing another facility online with Topper Village. We anticipate having students who will be switching over to occupy very soon.

In Fiscal Affairs a clean audit was received, which Ms. Hudson will reiterate. WL is facing a \$2.7 million deficit, the reality of where we are with the decline in enrollment, and we continue to spend as if we still have those students. We do have a plan, using some CARES and federal dollars to make us whole through this year, but we need to make some immediate changes to be prepared for next year. FY 2023 planning is in process and the Cabinet is meeting next week to start looking at ways to right size to be financially stable finishing this year out, but also for next year. We are waiting on some documents so we can discuss tuition and fees next week and carefully look at the metro rate to be sure we're competitive and it's benefiting WL. The HEPC is looking at a new state funding formula to recommend to the legislature. It is an outcomes-based model with funding formula monies being given to institutions based on accumulated progress of students, hours, institutional research and development activity, serving the academically underprepared, adult students/non-traditional students, and low-income students. There are other areas in the model and Chancellor Tucker will present it to the legislators, but there is no guarantee they will accept the model. Mr. Rodella and his team are making sure we cover ADA compliance issues and that we're doing what we need to do to be compliant with ADA regulations. We will use federal dollars to upgrade access into buildings to be consistent across the campus, as well as upgrade the surveillance system.

The Highlands Center, which costs about \$300,000 a year to rent, organizationally has been moved under External Affairs. Vice President Koegler will talk and run through what's going on with the new director, who we are glad to have on board.

Mr. Koegler stated that there are new collaborations and some new initiatives that are going to take place and provide a greater return on our investment at the Highlands Center. He gave a brief background on the history of WLU and the challenges its faced in 185 years. We will be creating a new way to engage alumni and Tammi Secrist, Executive Director of Marketing, is working on new signage and branding on campus, as well as having our first ever trademark in collaboration with Attorney Hooper. 50 years ago, WVNCC was our original downtown campus, and we knew then that we needed to be closer to the community. We have been tasked with a return on investment and the Ohio County Commission, who runs the Highlands Center, also wants to create more of a community presence. Mr. Koegler introduced new Director of the Highlands Center, Phil Carl.

Mr. Carl stated he's now been with the University one month. The Highlands Center financially needs to be repurposed. He is happy to answer any questions and the focus is accessibility and flexibility, keying in on a flexibility theme. As we move forward in community engagement, we need to disconnect from the hilltop and what could or should exist at the Highlands facility. We will take from

the hilltop and give it more flexibility/accessibility at the Highlands. Currently it's Monday through Friday, 9:00 to 5:00, with mostly masters level education. In the daytime we would like to take clinical speech and audiology, along with nursing, and recreate that community at the Highlands. People will not just see what we do but participate as customers and sell services to the community with a testing center and distance learning on campus. We can offer secure and accessible testing for any type of secondary or higher education testing such as the GRE exam. Another marketable tool would be to offer space for those struggling to find places to meet. With the event center right next door it would be a great connection with the Development Authority, and we could host and sell events.

A discussion followed returning to the funding formula. The presidents have met with the Chancellor and CFO's to look at this particular model being borrowed from Tennessee. Dr. Evans stated that opposed to receiving the same amount of money, they will look at programs and it will depend on how successful you are, and monies will be based on success and given that way. Everyone will not receive the same amount and if you're not producing, you will not benefit from some of the premium dollars. Dr. Cervone stated they are just rolling out this type of funding at the University of Tennessee. There has been some controversy, but it's motivated by incentives and production. If you don't produce you have to figure out a way to earn more money. So far it seems to be working. Dr. Evans stated that the downside of the model is that it's looking at students within the state, so we're not sure if the legislators are going to buy your enrollment for out-of-state students. That is a big issue, whether the state is going to provide additional funding based on students not within the state. A large percentage of our students are out-of-state.

## **VIII. Reports**

### **A. Interim Provost (Suderman)**

Dr. Suderman noted that she is looking forward to commencement on Saturday. We will be trying something different, a pilot study, and are working with faculty and student services. Faculty will be getting grades in earlier for those students who are graduating. Student Services will get these grades compiled in order to give graduates their actual diploma instead of mailing them as was done previously. We will discuss what worked or did not work so we are able to replicate the process at the May commencement. We will proceed with asking to update Policy No. 232: Reporting Grades and redo the policy on when grades are due.

The Interim Dean of Graduate Studies was tasked to increase the graduate culture on campus, and we are going to be starting a Graduate Student Association. This will go a long way in increasing that culture, with an emphasis to build their leadership skills. A synopsis of projects going on is contained in the Academic Affairs report in the board packet. The Governors Honors Academy Grant proposal was submitted and has been approved to be one of the finalists. A group will be coming to campus on December 15<sup>th</sup> for 1.5 hours to show all that's good about WLU. We will be meeting on December 13<sup>th</sup> for the best plan of attack. The theme of the proposal is The Nature of Happiness and is three weeks of courses for high school students.

The first doctorate program in Educational Leadership has a solid dean leading it, Dr. Cathy Monteroso. We have already had an advisory meeting with people in the community, those being Zac Shutler, Principal, Union Local High School, Stephanie Zimmer, Brooke County Schools, Shelby Haines, Marshall County Schools, and Dr. Mary Ciszek, Hancock County. We hope to have our intent to plan ready and submit to the HEPC in April of 2022, with the goal being to have our first class in August 2023. An articulation agreement is in process with Pittsburgh Technical College to partner with our MBA program. Students will be able to take up to four of our MBA courses as undergraduates and hook them into completing their MBA with WLU.

### **B. Enrollment (Cook)**

Mr. Cook gave the following enrollment update as of December 8, 2021:

Fall 2021 Enrollment Headcount as of 12/3/2021	2330
Fall 2020 Final Enrollment Headcount	2483
	-153 (6%)
Spring 2022 Enrollment Headcount as of 12/3/2021	1608
Spring 2021 Enrollment Headcount as of 12/3/2020	1747
	-139 (8%)

Spring 2022 New Student Applications as of 12/1/2021	212 (Up 25%)
Spring 2022 New Student Accepted Applications as of 12/1/2021	81 (Up 13%)
Fall 2022 New Student Applications as of 12/1/2021	1032 (Up 17%)
Fall 2022 New Student Accepted Applications as of 12/1/2021	669 (Up 28%)

The bright spot is that we're back out on the road, in high schools, and bringing people to campus. Spring applications are up significantly with accepted students up 13%. Next fall we are up 17% with accepted students up 28%. These are good signs moving forward, but we still must deal with this current year. Last week we had the largest group on campus in two years with 81 families. We must get them on campus and last year we couldn't do that due to COVID. We are facing challenges such as the enrollment cliff in four or five years where high school graduates are going to bottom out. Dr. Evans mentioned the mask mandate, which will continue. We had very few positive cases in the fall and will need to test all unvaccinated after the break. Dr. Cervone asked who our biggest competitor is right now. Mr. Cook stated WVU, Marshall, Fairmont, and Ohio State seem to be our biggest competitors. He reiterated that once we get them on campus, there's a great chance to get them to enroll. Campus safety is a big deal; we have our own police force, and the Ohio County Sheriff substation. West Virginia only has 48% of high school graduates going to college after graduation. There are many vocational opportunities for students and the gas and oil industry; college isn't the first option anymore.

**C. Staff (Glanville)**

Mr. Glanville stated that the Staff Council last met on November 18, 2021 and received approvals for fundraising and a raffle for the parking space. A date will be announced for the upcoming Terrific Topper award, recognizing people for above and beyond service at WLU. Topper Friday was also discussed as a collaborative with the Employee Engagement Committee. Staff Council will meet one more time this semester.

**D. Faculty (Metz)**

Dr. Metz was unable to attend the most recent Faculty Senate meeting. He believes faculty have been pleased with the progress made working on the policy for plagiarism and reformulating the promotion and tenure concept. Dr. Evans noted that it was Dr. Suderman's recommendation to make the promotion/tenure a quantitative process. A push is on for those who are working with new faculty to work on their yearly review to make sure they are making significant progress in the completion of their promotion and tenure requirements. Faculty are also interested in how a faculty member is selected for the provost search committee. Their recommendation is that they should be chosen by a delegation of faculty.

**E. SGA (Jones)**

Ms. Jones is unable to attend this evening.

**F. Foundation (Hill)**

Ms. Hill gave a brief report reflecting on the numbers at the end of November, which is located on page 44 of the board packet. Total funds raised July 1, 2021 through the end of November are \$755,000; compared to last year at the same time we are 15% behind. We have 220 new donors and a retention rate of 48%; compared to last year which was a little over 50%. The endowment sits at \$25 million. The Foundation annual report is in the mail and should be received in the next few days. The Foundation is currently engaging in a strategic planning process and recruiting a committee. Mr. Baker has agreed to help with the BOG input in the process. The current three-year plan has come to an end and it's time to reevaluate and refresh the plan. The Day of Giving will be held April 6, 2022 and we will be communicating in advance of that date in a variety of ways. The women's and men's basketball teams are playing this evening at 5:30 p.m. for the women and 7:30 p.m. for the men. Stop over at the VIP event, courtesy of the Dirty Dog Tavern.

**IX. Finance Report**

Ms. Hudson noted that she started at WLU on August 13, 2021, and on day one jumped into the audit, provided a draft of the financial statement on September 15<sup>th</sup>, and provided the final financial statement on October 15<sup>th</sup>. An enormous thank you goes to Attorney Hooper; at the time we did not have a controller either and she was a huge help. Michael Smith started on November 22<sup>nd</sup> as the Controller.

Ms. Hudson noted there are four documents in the board packet that were reviewed in detail with the Finance Committee. After the audit was completed, the budget was reviewed line by line. Categories were adjusted; waivers to students were listed as \$6.1 million, but it's closer to \$6.7 million. The Main Hall roof desperately needs to be repaired but not budgeted for in any way; \$886,000 to repair that roof. Looking at what was put together in total, we have a deficit of \$2.7 million.

When this information was discovered, we see certain things that will get us through this fiscal year. Royalties were projected at \$387,000, but at the end of October we were already at \$391,000, which will help tremendously if it remains constant. The HEPC will help with the Main Hall roof and CARES act dollars can be used for the student portion and institutional portion of that money. The institutional portion can be used to pay off student balances and will be able to pay off over \$400,000 of past student balances and cover receivables that are outstanding. As a Cabinet we believe we can recover about \$500,000 by carefully looking and signing off on anything greater than \$500 and carefully watching expenses. All these items equal about \$2.7 million, but we cannot sustain the expense budget that we have with less students. There are going to have to be changes made.

We are currently at a net revenue of \$17.7 million and expenses of \$14 million. Looking at the historical analysis, capturing our enrollment, and full-time employees, you can see that in FY16 we were looking like we are today. In FY17 an attempt was made to right size the university and get expenses under control; the total employee count was 260. Our fall enrollment during that time was 2,324; today our total employee count is 319 and headcount is only 11 more students. Also, in FY17 the expenses budget was \$37 million, today its \$43.8 million. Waivers in 2017 were \$4.5 million and they're expected to be \$6.7 million this year. The personal services budget is \$4.2 million great than it was in 2017. Waivers are discounts given to students and I say this to make you understand that we are going to, as a group, discuss how we are going to right size this university. We cannot be sustained with the current enrollment. A brief discussion followed regarding reducing employees, increasing enrollment, and additional revenue streams.

**X. Information Gathering**

None.

**XI. Next Meeting Date – Wednesday, February 2, 2022**

**XII. Adjournment**

On motion by Thomas Cervone and seconded by David McKinley, the meeting adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

Richard Lucas \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

Jamie Evick \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary