

**West Liberty University
Board of Governors**

**Minutes
February 2, 2022**

Attendance:

Jack Adams, Michael Baker, Arlene Brantley, Richard Carter, Thomas Cervone, Jamie Evick, Ryan Glanville, Mackenzi Jones, Richard Lucas, David McKinley, Jason Metz

Unable to Attend:

Stephanie Shaw

Administration/Faculty/Staff:

Monique Akassi, Scott Cook, Mary Ann Edwards, W. Franklin Evans, Angie Hill, Stephanie Hooper, Jason Koegler, Diana Harto, Lori Hudson, Cathy Monteroso, Joe Rodella, Sean Ryan, Ann Saurbier, Lynn Ullom

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

Chair Lucas called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

II. Introductions

None.

III. Public Comment

None.

IV. Agenda Order

No change to the agenda order.

V. Approval of Minutes*

A. Minutes of the Full Board December 8, 2021*

On motion by Mackenzi Jones 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 December 8, 2021.

B. Minutes of the Executive Committee December 8, 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 Executive Committee of December 8, 2021.

VI. Boards Items for Approval*

None.

VII. President's Report

Dr. Evans reiterated his core priorities, those being demonstrate academic success, emphasize University branding, strengthen community engagement, ensure operational excellence, and enhance student experience.

In addition, the presidential priorities remain the same, those being enrollment, financial stability, student success, community focus, and alumni engagement.

With regard to Academic Affairs, classes began on January 10, 2022, and Dr. Evans acknowledged that Dr. Cathy Monteroso has been appointed Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. Dr. Monteroso is the former Dean of the College of Education and Human Performance. A MOU with Pittsburgh Technical College was signed, allowing students to take courses and not only graduate, but allow them to take courses at WLU to count toward their MBA. We are pleased that Professor Steve Criniti was named WV Professor of the Year. Former board member Linda Cowan has been named as a finalist for the upcoming Professor of the year. The HLC accreditation is looming and Dr. Evans thanked the board for approving the revised mission statement last month. The Marketing area will be getting it out across the board. The BOG self-assessment was finally

done, with 11 of 12 board members completing for a 92% return rate. The information will be compiled and distributed in the next few weeks. We are now looking at our Vision Statement, goals, and objectives. Hopefully, by the time we get back together, all of that will be done and the assessment will have taken place. Our new Accreditation Liaison and Dean of the Gary E. West College of Business, Dr. Ann Saurbier, is an experienced evaluator. Dr. Evans asked Dr. Saurbier to give an update on the accreditation process.

Dr. Saurbier gave an update on the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) process. The University was last fully accredited in the 2017-18 academic year; this is the 4-year check point. It's an assurance review where we actually prepare and compile evidence for the University to share with the HLC to show that we are still in compliance with criteria and focusing on continuous improvement, which is critical from the HLC perspective. The review and update of the Mission Statement winds up falling at a great time from the HLC perspective. It drives many of the reporting criteria, moving us forward to take a look at the Vision Statement. The narrative we prepare for the HLC will actually share with the Commission all of the good work we're doing to actually align with the strategic plan. We will be compiling data the next few months and collaborate with the campus team; information is due to the HLC about the middle of May. There were no questions for Dr. Saurbier.

Dr. Evans noted that our wrestling team are MEC champions and moving onto the regionals. The men's basketball team is ranked No. 1 in the conference and our women are ranked No. 2. In other polls, softball is ranked No. 1, as well as tumbling and acrobatics at No. 1, having edged out Fairmont. Women's tennis and men's baseball are ranked No. 2, with men's tennis ranked #3. The spring season has already gotten underway.

COVID testing for students was mandated for all students on their return to campus. Of 1,150 some odd students tested only 5.9% tested positive. Many students who did test positive did not have symptoms. Enrollment, as anticipated, is lower but it's no surprise for spring enrollment to be less than fall. Mr. Cook will share specifics in his report. The last phase of Topper Village has been completed and students are in the facility. There are currently some heating issues, but they are being addressed.

With regard to fiscal affairs, we disseminated HEERF act dollars to the tune of \$3.1 million to students. It is our hope that they use the money wisely for COVID related items or to pay some of their invoices.

The food service contract ends in the near future and the bidding process has started. Three vendors will be making presentations this week and we are hoping that the food service will be more of a partnership; we expect something in return. The bookstore contract is also coming up for renewal.

The FY2023 budget planning process has begun. The HEPC is looking at implementing an outcomes-based funding formula where we would receive additional dollars based on some of the outcomes for the priorities that the State has put into place.

Our metro rate is a little bit out of balance for students who pay out-of-state tuition. The metro rate allows, in certain areas of Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, a reduced rate. The current rate is less, but not significantly less to attract the kind of students we would like. We are looking for a much more in-balance rate. The question is whether there is a limit as to how far we can go. A brief discussion followed. Ms. Hudson will do some checking and inform the board and president. Our international students are at an all-time high with the largest group we've had on our campus.

The Highlands Center is continuing to undergo major changes and hold events, with a recent article in the newspaper highlighting the center and events. We are looking for a new Alumni and Development Director of the Foundation. External funding and donations increased in December, well above what was anticipated.

Dr. Evans introduced our new Special Assistant to the President for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Special Initiatives, Dr. Monique Akassi. She is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati, Wright State University, Morgan State University and has worked in higher education for quite a few years serving in a variety of capacities. She has been a faculty member and English is her area of expertise. She has completed postdoctoral studies, earning certificates in diversity and inclusion from Cornell

University, and management and development and women in higher education leadership from Harvard University.

A brief discussion followed with regard to the provost search. After the second failed search we have not started back up that process. Dr. Monteroso is serving as interim to provide some consistency, and the plan is to repost the position later in the spring. Finding the right person is no easy task; Concord went through six searches, Frostburg three, and Fairmont three. We want the right person selected and hired.

VIII. Reports

A. Provost (Monteroso)

Dr. Monteroso stated that for the last two days the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs at the WV HEPC, Dr. Brumfield, has been on campus. It was a longer visit than anticipated, but a great visit. He learned a lot about WLU and addressed many things in his report, including being on board with support for the doctoral program. He visited the clinics and offered support for the nursing fund that's being submitted to the HEPC grant. The College of Education and Human Performance is in the process of a pilot program for tenure and promotion. Sarah West is working with the system adopted last year but not fully utilized. She was able to work with the Live Text system and is making phenomenal progress, and due dates have been waived. Mr. Rodella put together a lot of technology and we have learned what we have to do to make it work efficiently. Dr. Monteroso congratulated Dr. Criniti being named WV Professor of the Year, along with Dr. Cowan as a finalist for this year. There were no questions for Dr. Monteroso.

B. Enrollment Update (Cook)

Mr. Cook gave the following enrollment update:

- Fall 2021 Enrollment Headcount (Final HEPC Report) 2329 (6% decline/154 students)
- Spring 2022 Enrollment Headcount (January 19, 2022) 2037 (-190 from Spring 2021)
- Fall 2022 Accepted Applications 1002 (15% Increase)
- Fall 2022 Submitted Applications 1391 (11% Increase)
- Fall 2022 Housing Applications 123 (37% Increase)

Faculty have yet to verify all spring enrollment and one graduate program is yet to register students, but we should have a solid number in a few weeks. Fall enrollment will be larger than this past year, but two populations did see a decline. The metro rate and in-state numbers have dropped due to demographics. All indicators are good for a larger entering freshman class. A brief discussion followed with regard to fall and spring numbers.

C. Staff (Glanville)

Mr. Glanville stated that the Staff Council is selling raffle tickets and had a great response to the Terrific Topper nominations. Nominations were received for Diann Nickerson, Vincent Sirianni, and Karen Gerardi. We are excited that we have staff members taking advantage of the opportunity to nominate and recognize some of the great hilltop customer service and wonderful people we have at WLU.

D. Faculty (Metz)

Dr. Metz stated the Faculty Senate has developed a committee to focus on the promotion/tenure process, taking into account Dr. Evans and Dr. Suderman's recommendations. They are working on adding items to the process. They are also working on the Policy Committee and continue to work on the anti-plagiarism along with Dr. Evans. A committee has been formed to focus on the faculty handbook to make it an actual resource to new and current faculty, not just a list of policies and procedures. Faculty Senate has made a request to entertain a policy related to the provost search. In a presidential absence, the provost already assumes the role of interim president. The faculty are requesting a BOG policy on the search and hiring of a provost since in the absence, the provost takes the interim president role. Since the president answers to the board, we feel it necessary that there should be a BOG policy governing the hiring of a provost since they will then be answering to the board.

E. Student Government (Jones)

Ms. Jones stated that the applications for senator positions were sent out yesterday afternoon and they are hoping to fill the six vacant senate seats. SGA's Sodexo Committee is currently working with Doug Orr regarding the contract.

Plans for the spring include the SGA hosting a Valentine's week fundraiser for a local animal shelter. They plan to sell flowers, bears, and candy to the campus community. They have reached out to Joe Mills to see if SGA could assist maintenance in any way, as the recent weather has certainly impacted their staff. Regarding his feedback, SGA will be cleaning the campus at least once a month to provide helping hands in keeping the campus beautiful. SGA also plans to reach out to Greek Life to see if they would be willing to help.

SGA is also looking ahead and planning their Spring Fling, with the date set for April 29th. It has not yet been determined if the event will be held on or off campus. King and Queen nominations will be sent out in the upcoming weeks for Greek Life. SGA is once again having their annual SGA Day the week of April 25th.

IX. Finance Report

Ms. Hudson referenced the FY22 Operating budget Status report contained in the packet for quarter ending 12/31/21. Based on identified shortfalls in the original budget, revenue in the form of undergraduate tuition is on target and will end better than budgeted due to summer revenue not yet being posted. Graduate tuition and room and board are trending lower than expected, with summer tuition yet to be posted and discounts appear to be about \$200,000 lower than expected. There has been a better than expected increase in royalty revenue this fiscal year, as well as other summer conference revenue trending higher.

In December we were able to utilize COVID relief funds received from the government for lost revenue, about \$1.1 million, which greatly helped with this fiscal year budget. Personal services and fringe benefits, at 14 of 26 pays posted, including the increment, were expected to be over budget but are actually on target with the original approved budget due to turnover and unfilled positions. The deficit we are faced with this fiscal year included an amount for the main hall roof of about \$490,000. During the weekly CFO calls with the WV Higher Education Policy Commission, they mentioned bonding refunding sometime mid to late February. We will know more then about what those funds will be but expect that project to be covered with those funds. This fiscal year is going as expected overall with a plan in place to cover the deficit of \$2.7 million.

With regard to the FY23 budget, knowing we were facing a deficit in FY22, we have started the budget process early to determine where we are with expense requests sooner rather than later, and in case we have to make cuts of any kind. On December 20th a small cabinet retreat was held, and a tool was provided for use by the cabinet members. Budget workbooks that can be shared with various departments, coaching staff, and other units were provided to start preparing expense requested budgets now instead of waiting. Procedure 10 states that we prepare the budget during the spring semester.

We had \$3.1 million remaining in HEERF funds, worked with the financial aid office to identify students enrolled in the fall of 2021, and prioritized based on need. Awards of \$1,000 to \$2,000 each for these students were given at the end of January. The money could not be used for anything except student awards. It is our hope the students used the money to pay their invoices.

In other matters of focus, the bookstore and food service contracts are ending June 30th and we have received two responses to our RFP; Barnes & Noble and Follett. There were three responses for the food service contract; Sodexo, Aladdin Campus Dining, and Metz Culinary Group. We will be opening the financial portion of those bids and the last interview is scheduled for this Friday. We will likely be in a position to make a decision soon thereafter. Both are expected to start on July 1st, and we don't expect any issues with transition for those contracts.

Ms. Hudson noted she would like to speak to the issue of raffles held on campus. It is her understanding that any raffle needs to be approved by the business office. There are rules and regulations in place at the state level and only \$12,000 yearly for the entire university is allowed. In the future, departments need to run these by the business office and have them approved.

X. Information Gathering

Chair Lucas noted that as a follow-up with our process as mandated by the University, our censure and process of developing the presidential evaluation, which we plan to start in February. It looks very likely that we will complete the evaluation by the end of April. The Governance Committee, Executive Committee, and the Board will develop the actual contact outreach. Mr. Lucas reached out for historical records going back to President Capehart and other previous presidents, receiving a variety of options in evaluations. It is also in line with policy that we do a presidential evaluation, and we will have that out and hopefully concluded by mid to late April. We have templates so that we do not have to reinvent the wheel and will refine this process and move forward.

XI. Next Meeting Date – Wednesday, March 30, 2022

XII. Adjournment

On motion by Richard Carter and seconded by Jack Adams, the meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

Richard Lucas _____
Chair

Jamie Evick _____
Secretary