

**West Liberty University
Board of Governors**

**Minutes
August 17, 2022**

Attendance:

Jack Adams, Michael Baker, Arlene Brantley, Sydney Burkle, Richard Carter, Thomas Cervone, Jamie Evick, Ryan Glanville, Richard Lucas, David McKinley, Jason Metz, Stephanie Shaw

Administration/Faculty/Staff:

Monique Akassi, Amanda Bennett, Phil Carl, Katie Cooper, Mary Ann Edwards, W. Franklin Evans, Cecelia Konchar Farr, Jake Flatley, Diana Harto, Angie Hill, Stephanie Hooper, Lori Hudson, Jeff Jenkins, Karen Kettler, Jason Koegler, Cathy Monteroso, Vincent Mumford, Ryan Quinn, Adam Ripley, Joe Rodella, Ann Saurbier, Lynn Ullom, Maureen Zambito

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

Chair Lucas called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

II. Introductions

None.

III. Public Comment

Adam Ripley spoke regarding financial aid and the Elbin Scholarship.

IV. Agenda Order

No change to the agenda order.

V. Approval of Minutes

A. Minutes of the Full Board June 1, 2022*

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 minutes of the full Board of June 1, 2022.

B. Minutes of the Executive Committee June 1, 2022*

On motion by David McKinley and seconded by Sydney Burkle, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the minutes of the Executive Committee of June 1, 2022.

VI. Board Items for Approval*

A. West Rentals Donation of Land*

Dr. Evans stated that Gary West has already given the University the Gary E. West Event Center, and next to it is a two-story apartment. This apartment interferes with our working toward converting the center into the aquatic conservation center. Mr. West has agreed to give us the apartment and will now belong to WLU and be used along with the center. In order for Dr. Evans to enter into an agreement, the Board must give its approval.

The West Liberty University Board of Governors hereby accept the real estate donation by West Rentals, Inc. to West Liberty University of the Road Worthy property located behind the Gary West Event Hall including a .262 area tract with an approximate value of \$95,000, upon the terms and conditions as set forth in Contract of Pledge.

On motion by Richard Carter and seconded by Jack Adams, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to authorize the president of West Liberty University to execute any Agreements as amended above and the President, Chairperson of the Board and/or Chief Financial Officer, are hereby authorized to initiate all actions and execute all documents and instruments needed in order to obtain title to the subject property. Said transfer of the above-referenced real

estate is subject to final legal review and approval of the deed of transfer of the real estate and right of way comprising this donation.

B. Sale of Property*

Dr. Evans stated that we are asking the board to give approval for the president and CFO to be in discussions with persons who are willing to purchase land that we might have. An inquiry has been made with regard to some property on the left-hand side, north of campus. We are asking approval to give authorization to discuss or initiate actions on behalf of the University regarding the sale of parcels 53, 54, 58, and 60.

On motion by David McKinley and seconded by Jamie Evick, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the authorization of the President of West Liberty University to initiate all actions and execute all documents and instruments to carry into effect and finalize the sale of the property.

C. Governors Salary Enhancements Plan*

Dr. Evans noted that the previous discussion with regard to the Governors salary enhancement plan was tabled since we were not clear as to whether the institution would be responsible for maintaining the amount or if it will be part of the annual appropriation. We have since been informed that it will be added to the annual appropriation. We are also working to bring the minimum wage up, which is currently \$11.00/hr., looking to increase it to \$14.00/hr.

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 authorization of the salary enhancements effective October 8, 2022 as follows:

- **Faculty – a total of \$186,455 to be distributed based upon merit and external competitiveness (equity) tiers as established by WLU Policy 245 and Procedure 240. To be eligible, the employee must be at least .53 FTE and on payroll prior to July 1, 2022.**
- **Staff – a total of \$201,983 to be distributed through fixed dollar amounts based on quartiles within the Compensation Guideline pay ranges, equity and/or promotions, as applicable. To be eligible, the employee must be at least .53 FTE and on payroll prior to July 1, 2022.**

D. Higher Education Outcomes Based Funding Formula for WLU*

Dr. Evans stated that the HEPC and state have developed a funding formula to provide additional money to institutions based on a criterion, and we're asking the board to approve what we have come up with for our funding formula. We will receive dollars for progressions in metrics; students accumulating 30, 60, 90 hours, earning associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, etc. There is also money earned for workforce outcome; those students who graduate from WV institutions and stay in WV. Ms. Hudson noted we were basing the numbers on what we thought was best, but the state has recommended a formula, based on their research, that they feel is the best for WLU to maximize dollars coming to us. We went with the state recommended formula and that is what is being recommended today.

On motion by Richard Carter and seconded by Ryan Glanville, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the Institutional Mission Weight Selection and Approval form for submission to the WV HEPC.

VII. President's Report

Dr. Evans reviewed 2021-22, dealing with the pandemic, although we did not have a lot of major issues regarding COVID; we were still able to function. We were pleased with the funding the federal government provided through CARES and HEERF, some of which was distributed to students. Enrollment across the state was down, with no difference here at WLU. The bright note is that we have increases in graduate enrollment and continue capitalize on our graduate

programs. We started with a \$2.7 million deficit, part of which the former CFO prior to her leaving cut some \$900,000; we're not sure where or how. Ms. Hooper and Ms. Hudson have worked with this and were able to reduce the deficit to less than \$300,000. They and others worked hard to keep the institution financially stable, and Dr. Evans commended them for safeguarding the finances.

With regard to academic accomplishments throughout the year, there are new programs on board that Dr. Monteroso will update on, along with changes to low producing programs that we have no reason to keep. We have expanded in areas where we recognize a need. Our students continue to be successful, both in the classroom and outside as well. Many of our students are going on to graduate and professional schools, being employed before they graduate. With regard to community outreach, the Deans have worked hard getting out into the community and the Cabinet understands the same thing. Faculty and staff are also working to develop partnerships and reach the community. Community engagement has taken on a whole different look and continue to partner with various agencies.

Alumni engagement is on the upswing with the new alumni director who has been working diligently to get engaged and in touch with alumni. She will talk to you later on about the initiatives we are working on.

Highlights worth celebrating are the nursing reaffirmation, speech pathology & audiology status, and athletic training conditional acceptance. With the mission statement revision, we have curtailed the goals and priorities for the next few years. The HLC assurance review was conducted, and we made it through; Dr. Monteroso will discuss in her update. Dr. Saurbier was asked to stand and be recognized for her work on the HLC document. We met all standards but need to deal with retention and put into place a student success plan. Dr. Evans acknowledged the leadership of Dr. Saurbier and others who pulled the information together.

WLU's pass rate for the Physician Assistant program was 100%. Nursing continues to do well, along with dental hygiene. We continue to establish MOU's and are happy with the recent articulation agreement with Pittsburgh Technical College and Wheeling University. Kudos to Mr. Koegler for the people he knows and his many connections. We have secured grants in nursing, DEI, and social work, and hoping we can establish an office of sponsored programs that will assist in more grants.

Athletics continue to excel with All American's across the gambit. Kudos to Mr. Ullom and his team and the teams who perform well on and off the field with athletes doing extremely well in the classroom.

DEI initiatives are happening across the board, focused on students being included and feeling like they belong. From the LGBT community to non-traditional student, you can feel the wave and love being shown. The graduate center and Dr. Mumford and his team's numbers continue to increase along with programs. International students are at an all-time high this year. We have started planning for our first doctoral program and hoping to get that done so that by next summer we will have our first program up and running. We have stabilized the budget, which is certainly something to brag about with a \$2.7 million deficit. There was right sizing to do, which was painful, but had to be done. By eliminating some of the fluff and excess that people had gotten used to and looking at contracts and renegotiating leases, we saved dollars. Aladdin is the new food service vendor, providing us with some revenue we had not gotten from the previous vendor. We are partners, and even in the bookstore we are now doing things that had not been done before to the benefit of the university.

Fundraising in 2020 received 2,703 gifts with \$1.7 million raised. Last year at this time there we received 3,704 gifts with \$1.9 million raised, and 2022 received 4,620 gifts and \$2.4 million raised. Despite what you hear on the street, we can only report what the numbers say, and the numbers say we've done well. The annual fund had a 122% increase, seven new endowed funds, and new donors increased by 25%.

With the 2023 budget, as always, it's what's the new year going to be like; we will be transparent and not be caught by any surprises. Reductions were made across the board, not just certain areas. Priorities need to be based on needs, not wants. Ms. Hudson worked with members of the Cabinet, they came together, and it was her responsibility to put together this budget. It has already been shared with the Finance Committee and the Foundation, who have seen it all along, but it's been brought to Dr. Evans' attention that there are concerns that the University is in bad shape. There are rumors that there has been the mismanagement of funds and we're begging the Foundation for money; that wasn't what happened. As the budget was being put together, we sought the assistance of the Foundation, whose mission it is to raise and invest funds and steward dollars that will benefit the institution and students. Dr. Evans asked Ms. Hudson and Ms. Hill to explain the whole process, the request that was made of the Foundation, and conversations that were had since they are familiar with what took place and why it was done. These are not new dollars, just redirected dollars normally given to the University.

Ms. Hudson stated that as they put together the FY23 budget they were trying to look at revenue sources and see what might be missing from the big picture. In her experience she was used to seeing the support dollars that were derived from fundraising, such as restricted and permanent or endowed funds. WLU operates slightly different; instead of raising money to use solely for scholarships, we instead use money the entire academic year for individual and department requests. Requests are made to the Foundation for their wants, then presented and approved; this is how the Foundation is utilized. Recently in a conversation with Ms. Hill, there was a discussion and Ms. Hudson thought it would be a good idea if instead, we should see if they would pledge monies toward the school for our students. Those monies would offset our institutional waiver line or discounts. This is how that request came about; it would be a new way of operating, not a well-liked way by some, but it is Ms. Hudson's job to look into and seek out those creative ways of how we can help the institution. Our greatest need is our students; we wouldn't be here without them. Ms. Hill added that the process of the WLU Foundation Board of Directors is to approve any disbursement requests, and the BOD is fulfilling its fiduciary responsibility in looking at the request in that light. A special meeting of this board has been called to explore this request further and make their decision. The \$500,000 request is not over and above any monies we received in the past and it's not new money. According to Miss Hill it has to come from unrestricted funds and not department specific initiatives. Mr. Glanville asked if this goes forward, does this mean the Foundation cannot be approached for any support going forward? There is an annual spend from other funds if raised for a specific need, but it would do away with the needs request as we know it. Dr. Evans noted the perception, but this is not an increase from our disbursement; it's the same as last year with a different focus from us and an increase in unrestricted fundraising. This will probably increase the disbursement to the University if successful. Ryan Glanville asked Ms. Hudson how, in her research, this is done across not only the state but the nation. Ms. Hudson noted in the articles and information she has found regarding the use of an independent foundation, they are evolving to take on many different roles, assisting with operational needs of higher education institutions. A brief discussion followed on public/private institutions and whether the university helps pay the foundation employees.

Dr. Evans thanked the board for approving the salary enhancement funding, noting the faculty and staff will also appreciate, as well as the funding formula. We are hoping that we can carefully look at some of those areas and really grow in order to get the maximum amount of dollars. The Highlands Center, which has been an area of concern, has a new director, Mr. Carl. At one time there were many other employees, but Mr. Carl is the only one there now and he has been charged with coming up with a plan for the center. We need to maximize the space; we don't need 15,000 sq. ft. to do some of the things we want to do. We have engaged more people across the campus to know about the center. We are looking at keeping a couple classrooms available, along with the idea of a testing center, and other viable options. We are looking to refocus and rephrase the highlands center to significantly reduce the size and expense we have now. We don't want it to go away; unlike a business closing and shut something down, higher education and their programs go through a process. You have to teach out degree programs and if you shut down an instructional site you can't come back and open it again. You have to start from the beginning, and it could take a year or two years to be able to restart.

Areas of focus are to increase enrollment, maintaining financial stability, fostering student success, enhancing engagement, promoting unity, and boosting workplace satisfaction. The Chancellor shared this morning some disturbing news; the WV college rate for people in the state is 45.9% of people graduating and going on to college, with some counties with a rate of 11%. They are putting together a consortium of presidents and superintendents to rate the pool of those going to college. We need to work on increasing enrollment; not just to attract and recruit, but we need to retain students as well. Maintaining financial stability has always been an area of focus. Fostering success; students feel they are getting a bargain when they come to West Liberty; they feel good about themselves. We have success in many different areas; culture, education, and financial. We recognize the average number of credits hours in one college is 144 hours, which was the average. We know that our accrediting agency says a minimum of 120 hours is needed; we're out of balance, and we need to work on these numbers.

Enhancing engagement with community partners and alumni is still at the top of our list and promoting unity across campus. It's not the big bad wolf administration, but partners working for the success of our students. The SGA is coming to a cabinet meeting next month. In the spring the cabinet will go to an SGA meeting and staff council will be a part of the president's cabinet meeting. Also, the plan is that instead of the president being the only one to go to a faculty senate meeting, members of cabinet will attend and present information. We want to promote unity and workplace satisfaction. We are hoping not only with dollars from the governor, but also looking at other strategies. Ms. Harto is working on a survey for input from employees and what would make them enjoy coming to work every day.

VIII. Reports

A. Interim Provost (Monteroso)

Dr. Monteroso presented items celebrated by Academic Affairs, including Linda Cowan as a finalist for professor of the year. The application for Mathematics in Data Science was approved, along with the Doctorate in Education preliminary plans where we hope to have the full proposal complete in the fall. Goals for this year are removing barriers between students, faculty, and staff and focusing on student success. We need to be sure our operating systems are running, getting programs to 120 hours to graduate, some of which will be guided by the funding formula, but it's good practice of where we need to be. HLC passed all areas except retention; we need to work on retention. Dr. Monteroso has met with the chairs and started to work on the process to help monitor student retention. Many of the deans are in attendance this evening and they have been working hard with the chairs, pulling everyone to be on the same team. Dr. Monteroso couldn't thank them enough for the time and energy they put in at the University. The chairs meeting was today, along with professional development all week with exciting initiatives. The Faculty/Staff Institute will be held tomorrow from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon with breakout sessions for faculty and staff. Lunch will be at 12:00 noon in the new and improved Bear's Den, the former Marketplace. We are increasing dual credit, letting high school students know they can be successful in college. We have faculty going into the high schools, who are our best recruiters, which is important to retention as well. We are still working on the faculty handbook. We would like it to go out electronically and are making sure it functions well. It is a Watermark system, like the university catalog, which functions more efficiently. A brief discussion followed with regard to credit hours and curriculum requirements and the importance of attracting students to WLU.

B. Enrollment (Cooper)

Ms. Cooper, Assistant Vice President of Enrollment Management/Director of Admissions gave staff updates, noting Brenda King retired in June and Scott Cook in July, along with a few resignations this summer and a reduction in workforce due to the budget, all of which impacts enrollment. Being down seven people within the division in five months is hectic, but thankful for the staff they do have and working around the clock to make things happen. Several people have picked up multiple duties and hope that the salary enhancements will help keep the current staff.

New undergraduate accepted students are up 22% and fall housing is increased by 5.5% compared to 2021-22. Housing dropped during COVID with many rooms converting to single,

but students are moving back to campus. Overall, we are still down at 2008 students as of today. New freshmen and transfer students are up but down in returning students. There are two weeks left to enroll and we will be working through lists every day to get students back into classes. A brief discussion followed on recent resignations and status of open positions.

C. Staff (Glanville)

Mr. Glanville stated that Staff Council did not meet this week. Major things recently discussed were the salary increases. He believes that Ms. Hudson and Ms. Harto discussed this with Staff Council, how it would work, and took a lot of suggestions from the council. They were happy to be included, especially in the discussion to bring up minimum wage, and thanked the administration for hearing their concerns. They are still working on new fundraising opportunities for this year and think next week's meeting will be exciting.

D. Faculty (Metz)

Dr. Metz stated that Faculty Senate has not met yet but meets the third Tuesday of every month.

E. SGA (Burkle)

Ms. Burkle noted that the upgrades to the SGA area are nearly complete and will be a great space for students to hold meetings. Students have expressed concerns since they will no longer be able to hold event in the Gary E. West Event Center; the chapel could be an alternative. The Student Government meeting schedule has been revised to meet twice monthly. Plans for homecoming are underway, along with Topperfest events. Student leadership renovation is in progress and the SGA focus.

F. WLU Foundation (Hill)

Ms. Hill gave a Foundation update based on the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2022, noting that the Foundation is currently engaged in its annual audit and financial statements will be produced in a few weeks. The Foundation received a total of almost \$2.5 million, a 27% increase over 2021. With increased solicitations, events, and initiatives you can see by the chart how gifts have grown from FY18 to FY22. New donor numbers increased by 25% from FY21 with Ms. Hill giving credit to the growth of the annual day of giving. Faculty members hung out in the "war room" along with students making phone calls, engaging every part of campus in the project. Alumni giving is still a bit of a challenge, but Ms. Bennett has been in talks about partnering and working collaboratively with alumni to grow this number. The President's Circle level has grown, and the Board has moved to increase that society to \$2,000. Ms. Hill reviewed the remainder of the areas of giving, noting this success has been a long work in progress which is paying off, and hope it continues as we move forward.

G. Alumni (Bennett)

Ms. Bennett, Director of Alumni Affairs, gave an update on what they're doing, making a point to be more involved in the community, both on and off campus. As a two-time WLU graduate, she has been connecting with alumni, touring the campus and different departments, and getting familiar with the surroundings. After participating in the Alumni Directors engagement conference, Twitter and Instagram sites were started and the Alumni Facebook page participation has grown by 503%. There are small victories here and there and Ms. Bennett is attempting to go to multiple networking events each week. Being off and on campus, it is important to bring the hilltop off the hill and making people aware of what's happening. We have held two alumni happy hours so far with 40 to 50 attendees, with a mix of staff and alumni. The next one will be Thursday, August 25th, in Glendale, WV at Ruttenbucks. With regard to sustaining memberships, we are trying to come together and are ready to establish a structure for engagement. There has been no membership structure since 2013. This is going to be a way to bring everything together. Alumni engagement and giving is low with significantly more non-alumni donors than alumni. They will be working with the Foundation to tackle this giving potential. In meeting with other directors, they showed that this is actually a national trend, with a move from dues to sustaining memberships. These won't be dues; simply an annual tax-deductible gift with membership perks at each level of giving; this is still a work in progress. The Pittsburgh and Columbus chapters are trying to be a little more active

with hopes for a National Alumni Advisory Board and additional chapters. The goals are to work in collaboration with the Foundation, solicit in October with a push on social media, and push out on homecoming. The goal is 500 members by June of 2023.

IX. Finance Report

Ms. Hudson opened with the budget status report through 06/30/22, which ended in a good position overall with tuition and fees for undergraduate and graduate, with a surplus of \$212,000. We fall short on room and board by \$195,000, with discounts well over the original budget over \$6.1 million in waiver, ending with a little over \$6.7 million in institutional waivers. We received the entire appropriation of \$9.1 million for FY 22 with next year's appropriation set at \$9.5 million with the salary enhancement. The other venue performed extremely well with a fantastic year for royalties, which were budgeted at \$354,000 and we actually received a little over \$1 million, helping greatly with the deficit. The expense lines ended very slightly under at 99% with utilities going over budget. There is a water issue on campus, which Mr. Rodella mentioned prior, and a rate increase in water and sewage not accounted for in the adjusted budget. All other categories are on target with \$204,000 to the good in expenses, overall ending the year with a deficit of \$243,000, compared to looking at \$2.7 million. This was due to really watching expenses that came through and also being able to pull in lost revenue with CARES Act funding and being able to extinguish the debt of some students.

Ms. Hudson stated that for the past several years it was stated that we had over \$12 million in unrestricted cash in Charleston. \$10 million is very deceiving; in reality what our unrestricted cash is \$3.8 million. Ms. Hudson explained the breakdown of the \$9.9+ million restricted funds to get to the total unrestricted cash of \$3.8 million. At the end of FY21, WLU had 85 days of available cash, compared with other institutions in the state; Glenville was at 13 days. A brief discussion followed with regard to days of cash available.

The FY23 budget just started, beginning the year with a balanced budget based on the enrollment projection of Mr. Cook before he retired and of Dr. Mumford in graduate studies. If after enrollment is verified, the amount is significantly less, we would like to stay ahead of the game and look at this again to see if more adjustments will have to be made. On another note, the financial statement audit is well under way. CLA is working very well with the controller, Michael Smith, a former CPA from St. Clairsville. In the past the audit was only done by the controller. Ms. Hudson has implemented each staff member being involved in this audit, wanting them to understand that their daily jobs impact the reconciling to pass and have a clean audit. It's important that the entire staff be involved to understand what is necessary for the audit.

X. Executive Session

A. Personnel Matter – Contract Discussion/President

Pursuant to WV Code section 6-9A-4, Rich Lucas requested a motion to retire to executive session at 5:23 p.m. A motion to retire to executive session was made by Richard Carter and seconded by Michael Baker; motion passed unanimously.

At 6:20 p.m. Rich Lucas made a motion to rise from executive session and seconded by Jason Metz; motion passed unanimously.

XI. Actions Emanating from Executive Session

On motion by Rich Lucas and seconded by Michael Baker, an offer to Dr. Evans for a one-year extension on his contract beginning January 1, 2023 and ending December 31, 2023 was made with a roll call vote as follows:

- **Jack Adams - nay**
- **Michael Baker - yea**
- **Arlene Brantley - yea**
- **Sydney Burkle - nay**
- **Richard Carter - nay**
- **Thomas Cervone - nay**
- **Jamie Evick - yea**

- Ryan Glanville - nay
- Rich Lucas - nay
- David McKinley - nay
- Jason Metz - nay
- Stephanie Shaw - yea

The motion failed 8 to 4.

XII. Information Gathering

None.

XIII. Next Meeting Date – Wednesday, October 19, 2022

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Richard Carter and seconded by Michael Baker, meeting adjourned at 6:21 p.m.

Richard Lucas _____
Chair

Jamie Evick _____
Secretary