

West Liberty University  
Board of Governors

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Minutes  
December 7, 2022

Attendance: Jack Adams, Michael Baker, Arlene Brantley Sydney Burkle, Richard Carter, Tom Cervone, Jamie Evick, Rich Lucas, David McKinley, Jason Metz, Stephanie Shaw

Unable to Attend: Ryan Glanville

Administration/Faculty/Staff: W. Franklin Evans, Monique Akassi, Katie Cooper, Cyndi Galloway, Diana Harto, Angie Hill, Lori Hudson, Karen Kettler, Stephanie Hooper, Jason Koegler, Cathy Monteroso, Joe Rodella, Izzy Bennett, Ann Saurbier, Maureen Zambito, Phil Carl

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

Chair Lucas called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. and a quorum was established.

**II. Introductions**

A. FY22 Audit Report--CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP

Lori Hudson, Introduction of the auditors: Aaron Crall and Jennifer Bolin.

Mr. Crall is a principal with CLA and led the annual audit. Ms. Bolin, director of the audit. The WLU Audit is 100% complete and issued. The auditors met with WLU's finance team last week to go through the audit results in detail. Today they'll give a brief summary of the results.

Ms. Bolin discussed responsibilities in an audit. 3 distinct parties are involved in an audit:

1. Governance, responsible for the oversight of the audit process
2. Management at WLU, responsible for the preparation of financial statements, accounting policies, internal controls
3. Auditors, plan, design, and perform an audit and issue an opinion of the financial statements

CLA was engaged to perform an audit on the financial statements of WLU and on 10/28/2022 their unmodified opinion was submitted. Those statements do include The audit of the University's foundation which is audited by a different auditor. CLA's unmodified opinion on the financial statement was submitted. The result is a clean opinion and this is what you aim for each year. The audit report has a different layout this year. The opinion has moved to the first item in the report. This highlights the opinion and makes it more prominent in the report. At the end of the financial statements, you'll see the report on internal control over financial reporting. A material weakness was identified in the current year, but this does not change the opinion, it's still a clean opinion. This weakness stemmed from material entries that have to be booked during the audit--the nature of these entries caused the material weakness.

Rich Lucas thanked the auditors and they were dismissed.

**III. Public Comment**

None.

**IV. Agenda Order (Board may move to change order of consideration)**

**V. Approval of Minutes\***

**A. Minutes of the Full Board October 19, 2022\* (pgs. 3-6)**

**On motion by David McKinley 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 October 19, 2022.**

**B. Minutes of the Executive Committee October 19, 2022\* (pgs. 7-8)**

**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 19, 2022.**

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

**Audit\* (pg. 9)**

**Approval of the submission of the FY 2022 Audit Report**

**On motion by Michael Baker and seconded by Thomas Cervone, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the FY 2022 Audit Results.**

**Honorary Degree - Arlene Brantley\* (pg. 10)**

Dr. Evans: Our speaker for commencement is Trustee Arlene Brantley. Dr. Evans Gave a brief bio on Ms. Brantley and asks that pursuant to Procedure 238, that Ms. Brantley be awarded the honorary degree.

**On motion by Rich Lucas and seconded by Thomas Cervone, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the awarding of Honorary Degree to Trustee, Arlene Brantley.**

**Human Resources Governance Policy - Notice of Intent\* (pg. 11)**

Dr. Evans: Notice of Intent to draft and make available to the campus community, the HR Governance Policy. This policy enables the university to function, and delegates the president to have authority to administer a system for personnel matters, university policies and procedures. This new policy would assist the Board in eliminating some of the outdated policies that we already have.

**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 Human Resources Governance Policy, Notice of Intent of the stated policy.**

## **VII. President's Report**

Dr. Evans reiterated the strategic priorities, those being:

- Demonstrating Academic Excellence
- Cultivating Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
- Creating an Innovative Student Experience
- Enhancing Community Engagement
- Strengthening Operational and Financial Excellence

Dr. Evans gave a slight overview of some of the items of interest contained in the board report from all members of the executive cabinet.

Based on headcount, we're only a few numbers off from where we were last year. We report headcount vs. FTE because many reporting agencies ask for head count. preliminary numbers for next fall seem to be on target.

We have two new deans that will be joining our team - Dean of Graduate Studies and Dean of Library and Learning Resources. These positions have both been enhanced and brought to the level of dean.

Our Doctorate of Education and Instructional Leadership, Management, and Innovation are on HEPC's schedule to be approved next week. The next step will be HLC approval.

Fall 2022 Commencement will be held this Saturday, December 10th at 11:00 a.m. We are looking forward to having 75 graduates walking in the ceremony.

DEI - celebrated Breast Cancer Month and International Education Month. WLU has 68 international students that represent 31 different countries. An inaugural virtual conference on DEI was held this month. Dr. Akassi reported that we had students, faculty and staff from all over (not just WLU) and approximately 200 guests registered for the event. We plan to continue this conference in the future.

Innovated Student Experience-Mr. Ullom reported that in athletics, the Acro and Tumbling team will be hosting the NCAA Championships on campus in April, Women's Volleyball Team earned their first NCAA Tournament Bid this semester. Men's Cross Country Team finished 8th at the regional championships. Men's Basketball and Wrestling are both ranked #1 in MEC.

We held two graduate school fairs this semester.

Mr. Rodella and team are looking to enhance WiFi across campus. Especially in our Dorms. Students don't seem to be using Comcast.

Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, Health Services and Counseling Services have been sharing positive messages on mental health and studying tips. A lot of students across the nation are suffering mentally. We are thankful that our health and counseling services are being proactive by sharing this information across campus.

Community Engagement-Mr. Koegler, Ms. Bennett and the Alumni Affairs Team held an Inaugural WLU National Alumni Advisory Board Meeting. They met during Homecoming week. Also implemented the Sustaining Membership initiative for Alumni. This will work hand in hand with the WLU Foundation to provide monies for the annual fund.

We have MOUs with Idaho Health, Allegheny Health Network, East Ohio Regional Hospital, Maple Tree Cancer Alliance, Aultman Orrville Hospital, Elmhurst – House of Friendship, and Concord University

Highlands Center, Possible new location-Payton's Pretties is a location that we're looking at. This would be a 1/3 reduction from where we are now. This initiative is still being investigated as a possible option to downsize.

Dr. Evans commends Ms. Hudson and her team for providing us with a clean audit. In addition, we are maintaining a balanced budget. We're looking at not raising tuition for undergraduate students.

We received two appraisals for the Route 88 property. We've had people interested in purchasing it, so the appraisals were required to move forward with that process. We're moving to the next phase of that process.

Our Foundation reports as of the first quarter, around \$800,000 has been raised since July 1st.

Mr. Baker-Took a moment to thank Dr. Evans for his guidance and dedication to WLU. He noted that Dr. Evans came in at a difficult time as far as COVID, inherited a budget deficit that we weren't aware of, and got us through that all. Enrollment seems to be stable and the foundation is increasing. Thanks to Dr. Evans for all that he's done and best of luck.

Ms. Shaw-Seconds Trustee Baker's comments. Highlighting work on increasing DEI awareness, funding, scholarships. Ms. Shaw applauds Dr. Evans' efforts to move the university along.

## **VIII. Reports**

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

Graduation is this Saturday, December 10th. We have 84 undergraduate and 53 graduate students graduating. Austin Pyles is our student speaker. He is an Exercise Physiology Major and is part of our honors program. He is from New Martinsville.

Faculty/Staff Institute will be January 5th. We'll have breakout sessions again. A lot of faculty have offered to do extra breakout sessions for us and the PD sessions have been well received.

Program reviews coming up in February-Music, Business Administration, Social Science BA & BS, MBA Program.

Data Science is scheduled to start in the Fall. We are working on that campaign and already have interested students.

Ed. D. is on HEPC Agenda for 12/16/22 and HLC application has been sent.

We are currently working with IT, Enrollment Services and Student Services on retention/data analysis.

Two new hires-Sheri Thacker Dean of Graduate Studies (replacing Dr. Mumford) and Roger Getz (replacing Stacy) Dean of Library and Learning Resources. We didn't previously have a Dean of Library and Learning Resources, this position was enhanced so that we have someone to oversee all of the resources in the Library. We have support from our Foundation funds because there are endowment funds supporting this as well.

### **B. Enrollment (Cooper)**

Ms. Cooper noted that historical data based on headcount, this is what we're required to report to the state. Fall overall enrollment is ending better than anticipated. We are .06 down for fall enrollment. Spring enrollment is consistently down 55-60 students from the beginning of registration. This deficit isn't getting larger, so this is hopeful.

Current students that aren't graduating this fall, we're working with deans/advisors to see how we can get them re-enrolled. Some have balances and holds, so we're working with the Business Office. Working with athletics to make sure athletes are registered for Spring. Working with LSDC and they're reaching out to students.. We're moving in the right direction for spring enrollment. We'll work until the 23rd this month and will return on January 3rd.

Fall 2023, accepted applications are up slightly. This is promising from last year.

We build yield rate based on the accepted applications. Event visits are up almost 40 just this fall semester. About 60% of visiting students actually enroll.

We have 247 applications with no decision. We might be waiting on transcripts, test scores, etc. The team is working to complete these.

102 applications have been started, but are incomplete. This week postcards were mailed directly home to get things moving.

Fall 2023 numbers for undergraduates look promising.

Partnering with Graduate Studies and Marketing on geo fencing. Beginning in January, we'll start to re-target and you'll start seeing ads for 90 days.

Grad studies and accepted applications are where we'd expect them to be. We're struggling to find historical data in the graduate programs to help us figure out what we're comparing. This seems low, but is not concerning because cycles typically close in the spring.

Mr. McKinley asked what Ms. Cooper thinks enrollment will look like for next fall. Ms. Cooper stated that it's very early right now to say. She noted that new student numbers are up for accepted applications and visits, so this will allow enrollment to grow. We had two low years of new student enrollment, so we started small, but as we build the new students coming in it will increase enrollment. We are 3rd in the state for retention from last year to this year (next to Marshall and WVU). Overall, Ms. Cooper doesn't anticipate new students being down in the fall, based on current numbers.

Mr. Carter asks if high school graduates up for 2023. Ms. Cooper responds that there will be a steady decline for the next 10 years. We're also looking at a decline for the college going rate, it's at 40% in WV. Less high school graduates are going to college and we'll have to capture them early and look at programs that we're offering (what do students want?)

Mr. Cervone asked what our pitch is, what do we have that others don't? Ms. Cooper replied that what we should be selling is something that we've been discussing. We will be revamping orientations/open houses. We want students to visit with faculty when they're here to see what they'll actually be doing when they begin. Students can get content elsewhere. They need to get the faculty focus.

Mr. Cervone asked if we are going to revamp the website. A discussion followed with Mr. Kogler and Mr. Carl stated that we are in the process of having a RFP/3rd party redesign. Mr. Carl met with each department individually on campus to determine what the purpose of the website should be. Sourcing an RFP would be starting from scratch and engaging a 3rd party would allow an audit of the website and redesign of what we

already have--we're leaning towards a re-design and want to avoid starting over. When asked what was determined to be the website's priority (based on the meetings held), Mr. Carl noted that a firm decision hasn't been made yet, he believes that it should be dual purpose, but primarily a recruiting tool.

Mr. McKinley stated that we have a challenge since we're overstaffed (faculty) relative to students--this could actually be a positive. Student-teacher ratio is around 11-1 or 15-1. Ms. Cooper noted that this is discussed at our open houses. Faculty members are also advisors, so this is something that we try to sell and students are encouraged to ask faculty what they'll provide to them.

Open houses must be revamped, but time is a concern. Tours have to be timed perfectly. 60 guests can't all be in one area at the same time. We're looking to begin a pilot program to work through timing. Another hold up is that current students take these families on tour, so we also have to work around their class schedules.

Mr. McKinley asked how the short staff problem is going and if roles have been filled. Ms. Cooper responded that we have a new financial aid counselor and new admissions event coordinator. The VP position search is on hold and we're not hiring that position at this time. Ms. Cooper is still interim VP and technically handling the Admissions Director position, too so it's somewhat of a dual position at this time. Mr. Cervone complimented Ms. Cooper on her work in the interim role and he has some ideas on recruitment that he will share with her. Ms. Cooper noted that focus groups have been held. Also, working with IT on the retention side of things and to make sure we're bringing in the right students. We're looking at GPAs, test scores, first semester schedules. We don't want to overload them freshman year, we want to begin support for them before they even begin.

#### **C. Staff (Glanville)**

None. Unable to attend.

#### **D. Faculty (Metz)**

Anna Stephen-Robinson is leading a subcommittee to review Policy 210, in reference to faculty workload. Some faculty think there should be a different assignment of workload for graduate courses compared to undergraduate courses, because of the extra time needed for the graduate level courses. A study abroad handbook is in the works, this was tabled and will be discussed at a later date.

#### **E. SGA (Burkle)**

Ms. Burkle stated that the student leadership center has been updated. A projector was added, signage was finished. Still planning to get new furniture to make the space more functional.

Homecoming was a huge success. There were several events throughout the week.

New items this year were a kickoff party on Sunday, DEI event, the dance was moved to River City and transportation was provided for students.

New meeting schedule has been implemented. Meetings will take place twice monthly and zoom is an option.

Gave over \$3,000 funding to clubs and organizations that held successful campus and community events.

Sponsored holiday bingo last week and it was a huge success--this is one of the most popular events on campus. Nearly \$2,000 in prizes was available for students.

## **IX. Finance Report**

Ms. Hudson stated that the budget status report is complete and reflects where we are financially at the end of October, so we are 33% through the academic year.

Revenue-Undergraduate Tuition is currently at 51% and this means that retaining students we have for fall is vital to end the budget year in a good place. Graduate Tuition is at 35% and is billed differently than undergraduate, so 35% is on budget. Room and Board is currently trending higher than what was budgeted and this will help if retention of students doesn't come in where we'd like. Royalty income is at 71%, 500K was budgeted for the year and at the end of October we were already at 395K.

Expenses are on target and slightly under for salaries and benefits mainly due to vacant positions and the enhancement funds provided by the Governor beginning on 10/9/22. 35% is expected, 9 out of 26 pays were posted at the time this report was pulled. We're slightly lower in both categories, 33% personal services and 31% for fringe benefits. Utilities are slightly over budget at 39%. Other expenses are slightly over budget, but that is expected at this point because some debt is paid semi-annually. This is expected to resolve as the year continues. As we process spring semester we expect waivers to change and be under budget.

Mr. Baker asked if the enhancement funds show up in state appropriation and Ms. Hudson responded that the full amount is listed, but we've only received 4 million to date.

Mr. Carter asked Ms. Hudson if she thinks we'll be cash positive and she responded that we hope so, but a lot of this depends on us retaining students.

Mr. Cervone asked if there will be HEERF funds? Ms. Hudson stated that we have some remaining, but are looking at this to cover some HVAC systems, etc.

Ms. Hudson did note that she has met with Ms. Cooper and Dr. Monteroso with Lori to review Fall 2023 tuition, they're trying to get an early start and are hoping to freeze



undergraduate base tuition. They want to get this marketing message out early. They are also looking at graduate programs to make sure we're in line with our competition. It's possible that there's room to increase our tuition rate and class sizes. Other universities are offering waivers, so a freeze would be helpful to allow us to market/compete with other schools instead of increasing waivers.

Rich Lucas thanks Dr. Evans and staff. Mr. Cervone thanks Angie Zambito-Hill and Jason Koegler, recognizing them for their service, commitment, and love for WLU . Rich Lucas adds Ms. Edwards.

**X. Executive Session**

On motion by Richard Carter and seconded by Jack Adams, pursuant to WV Code §6-9A-4, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to move to executive session at 4:58 p.m.

On motion by Jason Metz and seconded by Jack Adams, the Board rose from executive session at 5:39 p.m. and reconvened.

**XI. Actions Emanating from Executive Session**

**On motion by Richard Lucas and seconded by Richard Carter, it was unanimously adopted 11-0, by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to contract Dr. Catherine Monteroso as WLU Interim President beginning 1/1/2023 for a six month period ending June 30, 2023. Subject to approval by HEPC and any other necessary authoritative bodies.**

**XII. Information Gathering**

None.

**XIII. Next Meeting Date - Wednesday, February 1, 2023**

**XIV. Adjournment**

On motion by Richard Carter & seconded by Michael Baker, the meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

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

Chair

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

Secretary