

**West Liberty University
Board of Governors**

**Minutes
October 16, 2024**

Attendance: Rich Lucas, Mike Baker, Katie Kacmarik, Lou Karas, Robert Kreisberg, Erikka Storch, Jenna Maguire, Stephanie Shaw, David McKinley, Tom Cervone, Will Turani

Unable to Attend: Jamie Evick

Administration/Faculty/Staff/Guests: Tim Borchers, Lori Hudson, Joe Rodella, Cathy Monteroso, Betsy Delk, Jacob Manning, Joe Rodella, Katie Cooper, Brad Forshey, Cyndi Galloway, Ann Saurbier

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

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

II. Introductions

None.

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 August 14, 2024*

On motion by Robert Kreisberg and seconded by Rich Lucas, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the minutes of the full Board of August 14, 2024.

VI. Oath of Office-Swearing in new board member, Will Turani

Will Turani read and signed the Oath of Office.

VII. President's Report

Strategic Plan: The complete, final strategic plan document was shared, along with initiatives for 2024-25. Metrics for these initiatives are being discussed across campus. Updates on annual initiatives will be presented at future BOG meetings.

Leadership Development Program (Aspire U): The program, led by Melissa Carrol and Dr. Borchers, involves 12 employees meeting monthly for 5 hours. The first meeting focused on leadership styles and StrengthsFinder assessments, while upcoming sessions will cover emotional intelligence and analytical prowess, with Ken Britt as a guest speaker.

RISE Up Workforce Initiative: Dr. Borchers discussed efforts to connect K-12 education, higher education, and the workforce. Multiple meetings have been held with local employers, and an event will be held at Waterfront Hall to connect the creative sector, internships, and job opportunities. Other business sector meetings are being considered, with participation from Wheeling University, Bethany, WVNCC, and several local schools.

Great Colleges Survey: Professional development, performance management, and communication were identified as areas of concern. Plans are being developed to address these areas.

Coffee with Cabinet: A monthly opportunity for faculty and staff to meet with cabinet members to discuss various topics. Upcoming topics include the contribution margin and a legislative update.

External Fundraising: Meetings are being held across campus to gather ideas for external funding. The goal is to increase the resource base and pursue federal funding opportunities.

EAB: The university is working with EAB on multiple initiatives, including financial aid optimization and marketing strategies.

VIII. Board Reports

A. Academic Affairs (Monteroso)

Aviation Program: The FAA site visit is scheduled for 11/8, and 12 students are enrolled, with flight training set to begin soon.

Dual Enrollment: New pathways in Health Sciences and Business are now available.

WV Rocks: The university is participating in a pilot with WV Rocks, where students are taking courses with other institutions, including a history course.

Course Sharing: Exploring options to share courses with other institutions.

Micro-Credentials: Through RISE, we've heard that communication skills are a major need. We're exploring small, skill-based credentials, such as communication badges, to help students develop and showcase specific competencies. This could be a flexible and convenient way to sustain students.

B. Student Affairs/Enrollment (Cooper)

Katie Cooper reported a current headcount of 2,298, with 1,496 undergraduate FTE. Housing and meal plan revenues are slightly down, but this was anticipated due to the Hughes Hall wing closure. Spring 2025 applications and acceptances are currently down, prompting increased efforts in student and parent communication.

Metro Scholarship: As part of our Financial Aid Optimization, the university is transitioning from the "Metro Rate" to a "Metro Scholarship" as a marketing tool to increase enrollment and revenue. The new scholarship will be reflected in the budget for the Spring BOG meeting. Other financial aid strategies include limiting full Elbin Scholarships and offering smaller, targeted scholarships to students who might otherwise receive no aid.

EAB has also recommended limiting the number of full Elbin Scholarships, which would allow the university to offer smaller scholarships (e.g., \$500 annually) to students who might otherwise receive no scholarship. If a new county is added to the metro rate, BOG approval would be required.

The university is also awaiting further recommendations from EAB regarding our test-optional policy.

Health/Science Open House: A Health/Science Open House will be held on November 1, which will showcase health labs. This is a new type of recruiting event for us and will potentially expand to other fields.

C. Physical Plant/IT (Rodella)

Natural Gas Incident: AEP contractors accidentally hit a gas pipe during scheduled upgrades, resulting in a temporary closure of some buildings. The situation was cleared within three hours, with assistance from local EMS and fire departments.

AACC Construction: The university received an additional \$276K for the AACC project, with construction expected to finish by early January, weather permitting.

Hughes Hall: Repairs are underway due to cracking in one section of the building, with completion expected by mid-to-late December.

Campbell Hall: The 4th-floor expansion project is scheduled for completion in December, adding a new lab.

HVAC and Electrical Projects: HVAC system upgrades are in the design stage and are set to begin in the spring. An electrical upgrade will be completed in 2-3 weeks.

D. Athletics (Forshey)

The Athletic Hall of Fame Ceremony was held on 9/14.

Scott Nolte was hired as the new Sports Information Director.

Two high school football games have been hosted on campus.

New equipment, including a camera, lens, and drone, has improved the quality of social media content.

Collaboration with the Wheeling Lions Club has led to mentorship and sponsorship opportunities for local homeschool families.

E. Fiscal Affairs (Hudson)

As of 9/30, enrollment has been verified at 1,496 undergraduates, with graduate tuition and fees on target. Lori reported on dual enrollment numbers and noted that we've received the first quarterly appropriation.

The PEIA Insurance Premiums increase was not funded by the state, but leftover funds (\$730K) were allocated to WLU. These funds are being used for various campus improvements.

The Audited Financial Statements were submitted to HEPC and we received a clean opinion with no findings. A full report will be shared at the December meeting.

F. Foundation (Delk)

The foundation has raised over \$2 million in revenue.

The foundation's FY24 audit was clean, with no comments or findings.

The foundation is planning an annual fund mailing and celebrating its 60th year.

Upcoming Events: Tri-State Tax Institute on 10/29 and Scholarship Day on 10/30. The Day of Giving will be held on 3/26 and a Foundation Board Meeting on 10/18 and the President's Recognition Banquet that same evening.

G. Faculty Representative (Kreisberg)

Robert shared a list of faculty shout-outs and added that Leslie Quinn secured a WV NASA grant to support homeschooled students.

Concerns were raised about the transition from Google to Microsoft and the upcoming changes to the learning management system.

H. SGA Representative (Maguire)

The SGA is focused on building campus culture and goals, including the addition of college-specific senator positions.

Luke Sweat was named chairman of the WV Advisory Council of Students.

Homecoming Week is being planned with a Broadway musical theme, including serenades, a pep rally, community service day, and two after-party options.

I. Staff Representative (Karas)

Employee of the Month: Matthew McKinney was selected as September Employee of the Month.

Nominations for Staff Awards are being accepted through November 1st, with awards being presented in January.

Lou also mentioned a Book of Hours manuscript was found in the library, which is currently being researched/verified.

IX. Board Items for Approval*

None.

X. Discussion Items

BOG Policies 1, 2, and 9.

Jacob Manning gave a brief overview of Policies 1, 2, and 9. Minor updates to these policies have been made based on HEPC language and processes for presidential searches. These policies will be shared for 30-day comment across campus before being brought back to the BOG for approval in December.

XI. Information Gathering: None.

XII. Executive Session

(In accordance with Section 6-9A-4 of the West Virginia Code, To avoid the premature disclosure of an honorary degree, scholarship, prize or similar award; and To discuss any matter which, by express provision of federal law or state statute or rule of court is rendered confidential).

Pursuant to WV Code § 6-9A-4, at 5:16 PM, a motion to retire to executive session was made by Robert Kreisberg and seconded by Lou Karas; motion passed unanimously.

A motion to rise from executive session at 5:37 PM was made by Mike Baker and seconded by Robert Kreisberg; motion passed unanimously.

XIII. Adjournment

On motion by Jenna Maguire & seconded by Lou Karas, the meeting adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

David McKinley _____
Chair

Tom Cervone _____
Secretary

Minutes submitted by: Cyndi Galloway