

**West Liberty University
Board of Governors**

**Minutes
February 12, 2025**

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

Unable to Attend: Jamie Evick, Erikka Storch

Administration/Faculty/Staff/Guests: Tim Borchers, Cathy Monteroso, Lori Hudson, Betsy Delk, Cyndi Galloway, Jacob Manning, Brad Forshey, Katie Cooper, Joe Rodella, Cecilia Konchar Farr, Stephanie North, Sherri Theaker

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

David McKinley called the meeting to order at 4:00 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 December 18, 2024*

On motion by Robert Kreisberg and seconded by Jenna Maguire, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the minutes of the full Board of December 18, 2024.

VI. President's Report

Dr. Borchers provided updates on strategic planning, with Cathy later discussing the contribution margin and Katie presenting additional details. The External Fundraising Task Force, led by Dr. Borchers, Betsy Delk and Laura Musilli, has been meeting with faculty and staff about opportunities for external funding that align with institutional priorities.

The university is at a point where proposals can be presented to external funders. Dr. Borchers met with state legislators regarding deferred maintenance, aviation program expansion, and corrective construction for Hughes/Beta Residence Hall. Discussions also included the Interprofessional Healthcare Education Center, which would provide space for labs, and the importance of maintaining reasonable PEIA costs. Additionally, he met with Senator Capito's staff regarding healthcare education, mental and behavioral health centers, campus police needs, and the Blatnik Hall renovation. As funding proposals typically open in March or April, the university aims to be prepared. Private funding projects underway include TV studio updates, the Bobby Douglas Wrestling Complex, and Trails Projects.

VII. Board Reports

A. Academic Affairs (Monteroso)

Cathy announced the Faculty Award winners: Felipe and Linda Cowan, Sarah Davis, and James Wood. The five-year program review is complete, and budgets will soon be set. Updates were provided on accreditation for graduate and undergraduate programs through the Commission on Accreditation for Allied Health Programs.

The six-year graduation rate target was 52%, and the university has achieved 60%. Retention rates will be available in April.

The Learning Management System will transition to Canvas in the fall, with training already underway.

Cathy discussed the contribution margin, analyzing revenue per credit hour and program costs. She clarified that overall costs are considered, such as music program expenses for private lessons. More updates, including possible recommendations, will be presented at the next Board of Governors (BOG) meeting. Tom Cervone is on the Program Review Committee.

B. Student Affairs/Enrollment (Cooper)

Katie reviewed spring enrollment numbers for graduate and undergraduate headcount, with 386 dual-enrolled students. She noted that the General Business Online major grew from two students in the fall to seven in the spring, and psychology courses will soon be available online. Offering general courses online assists WVNCC students transitioning into the program.

Fall 2025 applications for undergraduate and graduate programs are currently down. The admissions team is actively working to increase applications, including purchasing names from broader regions and refining communication strategies. They are prioritizing program-focused recruitment events and transfer days at the end of each semester. A campus-wide effort is needed to support enrollment growth.

Katie noted the Student Affairs Department has had some recent turnover in the Housing Department.

Topper Idol has been ongoing for two weeks and will continue through February.

Dr. Borchers noted that the Metro Rate Expansion was well received in the media.

C. Physical Plant/IT (Rodella)

The Data Security Plan remains operationally compliant, but updated requirements have led to necessary adjustments. IT is reviewing system access. Summer construction projects will include HVAC, window, and door replacements, affecting multiple buildings. These buildings will remain open but may lack HVAC or hot water. Notifications have been sent to affected parties, and plans are being developed to mitigate disruptions.

A small simulator has been installed at the airport, with a large simulator expected to arrive in early September for use in the Aviation Center.

The Campus Master Plan update is due this year, and previous plans will be audited to guide committee updates.

D. Athletics (Forshey)

Brad provided updates on athletics, noting that the men's basketball team is ranked 10th nationally and aims to host the NCAA regional tournament. Coach Howlett achieved his 200th career win on January 18.

The Men's Wrestling MEC Championship was hosted on campus on February 1, and the women's wrestling team has had a successful inaugural season.

The Spring Sports Kickoff Show was rescheduled for February 18.

Brad was invited to join the WLU Lion's Club Family Support Center board and our athletics staff remain busy transitioning between winter and spring sports seasons.

E. Fiscal Affairs (Hudson)

Lori reviewed the financial report, noting that spring enrollment is not yet verified. The university budgets based on full-time equivalent (FTE) students, and we budgeted for 1,447 FTE students. Undergraduate projections remain on target for this fiscal year, but graduate program enrollment is expected to fall short of billable hour projections, contributing to a projected revenue shortfall. Housing revenue is also down. Summer undergraduate revenue is expected to offset some of the shortfall, but still leaving a tuition-related deficit. Additional revenue and savings, such as eliminating rental expenses for Topper Towers, may help balance the budget.

For FY26, the university began Fall 2024 with 1,496 FTE students, dropping to 1,351 in Spring 2025, resulting in a revenue loss. Efforts are being made to improve student retention. Tuition rates and enrollment projections are being finalized, with anticipated increases in graduate and housing rates. PEIA costs remain a concern.

F. Foundation (Delk)

Betsy reviewed fundraising efforts, announcing the addition of three new endowed scholarships and two unendowed scholarships. A \$7,500 scholarship was established in the College of Business. Dr. Borchers and Betsy traveled to Arizona, Texas, and Washington, D.C., to strengthen alumni relations and donor engagement. A Washington, D.C., alumni group is looking to become more involved.

Topper Day of Giving is scheduled for March 26, kicking off with the Columbus Area Watch Party on February 26. Leading up to the event, social media takeovers and various activities will take place.

Katie Kacmarik discussed potential ways the BOG could support fundraising, such as writing thank-you notes and contributing to a travel fund for donor engagement. Official WLU Board of Governors note cards will be produced.

G. Faculty Representative (Kreisberg)

Robert shared faculty shout-outs and addressed concerns about students struggling with math skills. He emphasized the need for direct intervention and noted potential reductions in WVIMBRE grant funding under new administration policies. The loss of this funding could significantly impact faculty, research, and students. He urged attendees to contact legislators to advocate for continued NIH funding.

H. SGA Representative (Maguire)

SGA initiatives include a February 28 trip to Charleston with 10 students attending. The recent "Soup or Bowl" event resulted in 755 donated items.

Spring semester activities include:

- A special print edition of *The Trumpet* newspaper.
- A book club leading up to the Hughes Lecture Series.
- Creation of College Representatives.
- The "Night to Shine" event.
- Topper Idol continuing throughout February.
- Valentine's Day bouquet and card-making event.
- Upcoming trips to the zoo and Top Golf.

Campus organizations are hosting events for Black History Month, with Aladdin providing a themed dinner in celebration.

I. Staff Representative (Karas)

Lou reported that the Large Format Printer broke down, and Joe Horzempa covered the cost of a commercial-grade replacement using Biology Department funds.

The Employee Engagement Committee selected Andrew Lewis as Employee of the Month for January.

Three annual staff awards were presented at the Spring University Welcome event:

- **True Topper Award:** Tom Hepburn (WLU staff since 1981, Grounds Crew).
- **Topper Team Award:** Registrar's Office (Stephanie North, Laura Willis, Karen Gerardi).
- **Customer Service Award:** Lou Karas.

VIII. Board Items for Approval*

- **Spring Commencement Speaker and Honorary Degree**
 - President, Tim Borchers, read the proclamation
 - On motion by Rich Lucas and seconded by Will Turani, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the resolution as presented and authorize the President of the University to confer the Doctor of Humane Letters degree to Katie Kacmarik at its May 10, 2025, Commencement Ceremony.
 - Katie Kacmarik abstains from this vote.

IX. Information Gathering: None.

X. Adjournment

On motion by Robert Kreisberg & seconded by Katie Kacmarik, the meeting adjourned at 5:21 p.m.

David McKinley _____
Chair

Tom Cervone _____
Secretary

Minutes submitted by: Cyndi Galloway