

**West Liberty University
Board of Governors**

**Academic Affairs & Student Life Committee
Minutes
March 31, 2026**

In Attendance: Tom Cervone, Robert Kreisberg, Will Turani, Katie Kacmarik, Stephanie Shaw, Lou Karas

Unable to Attend: Luke Sweat, Jamie Evick

Others in Attendance: Tim Borchers, Cathy Monteroso, Katie Cooper, Cyndi Galloway, Sarah West

Meeting called to order at 9:01 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the January 27, 2026 meeting were approved following a motion by Will Turani and a second by Katie Kacmarik.

Academic Updates

Cathy Monteroso shared several key academic updates. The Master of Arts in Counseling program has been approved by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), and the Bachelor of Applied Science program is scheduled to launch in Fall 2026. Additionally, an Intent to Plan for a Construction Management program will be presented to Faculty Senate on April 17. Approval has also been granted for expansion of the Physician Assistant (PA) program, increasing the incoming class by seven students for a total of 25.

Further discussion on the proposed Construction Management program highlighted that it will be a new offering, with plans to seek accreditation. The curriculum is expected to include approximately 12 credits in business and 50 credits in construction-specific coursework. Dr. Borchers emphasized the strong workforce demand for graduates in this field and noted that external funding has been secured to support the program's initial years. Pending Faculty Senate approval, the University will begin the process of hiring a faculty member. There is also potential interest from the state in contributing funding. By the fourth year, the program is projected to generate \$480,000 in revenue with an enrollment of 45 students, addressing a critical workforce need in the region.

Contribution Margin

Contribution margin data by department and per student were shared with the committee via the Teams folder for review.

Program Review Process

A summary of the five-year program review process was provided in the Teams folder. As required by HEPC Series 10, academic programs undergo a comprehensive five-year review that includes a self-study evaluated by the Program Review Task Force.

Five-Year Program Review Recommendations

The Task Force provided recommendations to President Borchers in March 2026 and, based on that report, Dr. Borchers is making the following recommendations:

- MA Art Therapy Counseling: Continue
- BS Chemistry: Revise and Restructure
- BS Creative Art Therapy: Continue
- BA Elementary Education: Continue
- BS Psychology: Continue
- BA Secondary Education: Continue

Monitoring Reviews

In addition, several programs were identified for monitoring based on previous reviews. This could be due to a number of factors including contribution margin and program size but also assessment date. The Task Force has reviewed their progress. Dr. Borchers is making the following recommendations for the programs in this category:

- BS Dental Hygiene: Continue. No further action needed at this time.
- BA English: Revise and Restructure
- BA Visual Communication: Continue. No further action needed at this time.
- BS Nursing: Continued monitoring
- BS Pre-Professional Speech Pathology and Audiology: Continued monitoring

Next Steps

These recommendations have been shared with the Deans and Department Chairs. Following the Board meeting on April 15, the final recommendations will be shared. For those programs that are recommended for revision and restructuring, the President, Provost and Dean will convene meetings with the department to discuss their action plans. For those recommended for phase out or suspension, we will meet with the departments to plan next steps. These recommendations will need to go to the full board for approval at the April 15th meeting. Tom believes that the recommendations are warranted and a lot of work went into this to work through the reviews.

The AA/SL Committee would like to proceed with Dr. Borchers recommendations.

***A motion to approve the President's recommendations for both the five-year and monitoring reviews was made by Stephanie Shaw and seconded by Katie Kacmarik. The motion passed unanimously and will be forwarded to the full Board for final approval on April 15.**

Honors Convocation

Honors Convocation is scheduled for Wednesday, April 30, at 6:00 p.m. in Kelly Theater.

Personnel Update

It was announced that Karen Kettler has resigned, and Dr. Joe Horzempa is currently serving as interim dean.

Enrollment and Retention Initiatives

Katie Cooper reported that Fall 2026 applications are slightly down; however, acceptances have increased by more than 100 compared to this time last year. Efforts are underway in collaboration with EAB to encourage additional application completion in the coming weeks. Recruitment and engagement activities remain robust. Two recent Accepted Student Days drew nearly 200 students and their families. Upcoming recruitment events include the April 18 Black and Gold Day with 40 registered participants, a Transfer Day in early May, and a Dual Enrollment visit from Wheeling Park High School on April 22 with 46 students registered. The Sci-Fi event is also approaching, with more than 140 students signed up, along with additional high school visits scheduled throughout the spring.

Summer Orientation promotion has begun, with 115 students already registered—an increase of 20% over last year—despite invitations not yet being formally distributed. Lou Karas recognized Lauren Ames for her outstanding work coordinating campus visits for high school, middle school, and elementary groups, often managing multiple visits on the same day.

Campus activities for Spring 2026 were also highlighted. April will be especially busy, with Spring Fling scheduled for April 24 alongside the spring football game. Spring Week will take place April 27 through May 1 and will include various events such as faculty and staff appreciation and student engagement activities like “Build a Topper.”

Arts Update

The Arts program reported notable student achievements, including two students receiving top honors at the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) Eastern Regional Student Auditions. A related news article is available on the University’s website. The production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* was postponed and is expected to be rescheduled for next year. Upcoming performances include “Bonus Encore: A Night of Student-Directed One-Acts,” scheduled for April 22–26. Additionally, graphic design students will present their work at the Wheeling Heritage Center on April 30. Robert Kreisberg also noted that RECAP, scheduled for April 15, currently has approximately 70 applications.

Athletics Update

The Athletics report was shared separately via email from Brad.

Community Connections

The Intermediate Court of Appeals will visit campus on April 14 beginning at 9:30 a.m., where four cases will be heard. During Spring Week, the University will also host multicultural and lavender ceremonies.

Additional Discussion

Robert Kreisberg raised concerns regarding scholarship guidelines within the sciences/biology programs.

Lou Karas noted that WLU is increasingly becoming a host site for academic fairs, which may strengthen the student recruitment pipeline. Examples include the Ohio County Science Fair, Regional Science Fair, Social Studies Fair for grades 3–5, and a K–12 literature fair.

Will Turani offered to assist in promoting campus events by posting flyers through his workplace portal.

Adjournment

With no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 9:51 a.m. following a motion by Stephanie Shaw and a second by Will Turani.