

**West Liberty University
Board of Governors**

**Minutes
August 12, 2026**

Attendance: David McKinley, Mike Baker, Will Turani, Robert Kreisberg, Stephanie Shaw, Katie Kacmarik, Lou Karas, Luke Sweat, Tom Cervone, Jamie Evick, Erikka Storch

Unable to Attend: None

Administration/Faculty/Staff/Guests: Tim Borchers, Cyndi Galloway, Cathy Monteroso, Katie Cooper, Lori Hudson, Betsy Delk, Brad Forshey, Jacob Manning, Neil Szmunsky, Sherri Theaker, Andrew Lewis, Cecilia Konchar Farr, Ann Saurbier, Joe Horzempa

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

David McKinley called the meeting to order at 4:03 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 June 10, 2026*

On motion by Mike Baker and seconded by Katie Kacmarik, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the minutes of the full Board of June 10, 2026.

VI. President's Report

Dr. Borchers began his report by highlighting recent student and academic accomplishments, including the success of undergraduate research initiatives, strong Physician Assistant program outcomes, and a 100% pass rate for Dental Hygiene students on their certifying examination. He also discussed a new marketing initiative utilizing a Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) strategy. This approach focuses on optimizing the University's online presence for AI-powered search tools, recognizing that prospective students and families increasingly rely on artificial intelligence when researching colleges and universities. Additional efforts include increasing faculty visibility through publications and other opportunities that enhance the University's reputation and prestige.

Dr. Borchers provided several upcoming event updates. Homecoming is scheduled for October 17, with a full schedule available on the University's website. Career Connections Day and a Back to Business Chamber event will be held on September 30, followed by a Nonprofit Opportunity Fair on October 8. He also announced a generous commitment from Marty and Patti Adams, who have pledged \$20,000 annually for five years to support unpaid internships. The funding will allow the University to assist employers in providing meaningful internship opportunities for students.

VII. Board Reports

A. Academic Affairs (Monteroso)

Cathy shared examples of the University's new Experiential Major Maps, developed in partnership with EAB. The maps are designed to help students and families visualize the complete educational experience at West Liberty University by outlining academic requirements, experiential learning opportunities, career preparation activities, and professional development milestones. The maps will be available for all majors beginning this fall and will be incorporated into College 101 courses. She also reported that preparations for the Higher Learning Commission accreditation process are underway, with teams being assembled for Criteria 1 through 4 and team leaders to be announced in the near future.

B. Student Affairs/Enrollment (Cooper)

Katie provided an enrollment update and reported that current enrollment numbers continue to exceed projections. As of the previous day, headcount stood at 1,831 students, not including approximately 400 dual-enrollment students expected to be added. Undergraduate FTE was reported at 1,466 compared to a budget projection of 1,391. Graduate credit hours totaled 2,172, excluding the Physician Assistant cohort, and housing occupancy remained above projected levels. While some enrollment melt is expected after classes begin, significant impact is not anticipated. Katie also reported that planning for Fall 2027 recruitment efforts is already underway. In addition to traditional recruitment travel, the admissions team is exploring smaller, more targeted campus visit events and is piloting a streamlined direct-admit process for dual-enrollment students. She noted that the TopperFest schedule has been released and includes numerous activities designed to help students connect with campus early in the semester.

C. Athletics (Forshey)

Brad reported on recent athletics initiatives, including the upcoming Coaches Show scheduled for August 20 at West Family Stadium. He reviewed social media analytics and highlighted significant growth in engagement and visibility across athletics platforms. Brad also discussed the creation of a drone-assisted virtual campus tour, developed to help prospective students, particularly international student-athletes, experience campus remotely before visiting in person. The virtual tour will be available online and may be utilized by departments across campus as a recruitment tool.

D. Fiscal Affairs (Hudson)

Lori presented the Fiscal Affairs report, reviewing year-end financial results through June 30, 2026. Although expenses exceeded the approved budget, the University still concluded the fiscal year with an operating budget surplus. Lori explained that the surplus reflects revenue, including student receivables, and does not represent unrestricted cash. She reviewed the University's cash position, noting that after accounting for restricted funds, the institution maintains approximately 82 days of available cash on hand, which is considered a healthy level. She also highlighted numerous facility investments completed or underway during FY26.

E. Foundation (Delk)

Betsy Delk reviewed the Foundation's FY26 fundraising results and highlighted several significant gifts received during the year. Among the major gifts was a contribution from Thomas and Janet Pannett establishing the Pannett Family Physical Education Scholarship. She also noted continued support for the Clyde D. Campbell Scholarship Fund. Upcoming Foundation events include the President's Recognition Banquet on October 16, TSTI on October 27, and Scholarship Day on November 4.

F. Faculty Representative (Kreisberg)

Robert Kreisberg discussed concerns regarding excess credit hours accumulated by some students prior to graduation. He reported that he and Melinda met with Dr. Borchers to review the issue and that the Retention Committee is developing advising checklists to help students remain on track toward timely degree completion.

G. SGA Representative (Sweat)

Luke reported that students are actively planning Homecoming activities and that a full event schedule will be released soon. He also shared that updates are being made to the Student Government Association office and expressed optimism for a successful academic year.

H. Staff Representative (Karas)

Lou presented the Staff Report and shared that TIAA is working with the Higher Education Policy Commission to include regular campus visits in its service schedule. She also reported that a Benefits Subcommittee has been created to review healthcare costs and employee benefits. She noted that West Liberty University will host the ACE meeting in May 2027, with Dr. Borchers, Cathy Monteroso, and Lori Hudson planning to attend. Lou further discussed initiatives planned by the Employee Engagement Team, including a coffee and donut gathering prior to the University Welcome on August 20 and a school supply drive benefiting the Center for Arts and Education. During discussion, Erikka Storch suggested creating an Amazon Wish List to increase participation, and it was noted that the University's Food Pantry also maintains an active online wish list. Lou concluded by sharing that the Staff Council Scholarship Committee is currently conducting a clothing fundraiser to support scholarship awards for faculty and staff dependents.

VIII. Board Items for Approval*

A. Notice of Intent, Rule 1.6 Ethics

Jacob Manning presented a Notice of Intent to revise Rule 1.6, the University's Ethics Policy. The proposed changes would expand the policy to include Board of Governors members and assist the University in meeting Higher Learning Commission accreditation expectations.

A motion to approve the Notice of Intent was made by Erikka Storch and seconded by Katie Kacmarik. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Fall 2026 Commencement Speaker and Honorary Degree

Executive Session

Pursuant to West Virginia Code § 6-9A-4(b)(10), at 5:19 PM, a motion to retire to executive session was made by Erikka Storch to consider the Fall 2026 Commencement Speaker and Honorary Degree. The motion was seconded by Katie Kacmarik; motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session began at 4:49PM.

A motion to rise from executive session at 4:52PM was made by Mike Baker and seconded by Katie Kacmarik; motion passed unanimously. No action was taken during the executive session.

Following executive session, the Board considered the recommendation for the Fall 2026 Commencement Speaker and honorary degree recipient. The Board approved Kym Gable, distinguished West Liberty University alumna, longtime news anchor, motivational speaker, and recent inductee into the University's Wall of Honor, to serve as the Fall 2026 Commencement Speaker and receive an honorary degree.

A motion to approve was made by Stephanie Shaw and seconded by Erikka Storch. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Information Gathering:

None.

X. Adjournment

On motion by Katie Kacmarik & seconded by Mike Baker, the meeting adjourned at 4:53PM.

David McKinley _____
Chair

Tom Cervone _____
Secretary

Minutes submitted by: Cyndi Galloway