

**WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES  
October 7, 2010**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Dennis Madsen called the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University to order at 3 p.m., October 7, 2010, in Old Main 340, Bellingham, Washington.

**A Moment of Silence**

Chair Madsen asked for a moment of silence to remember Western student Dwight Clark.

Madsen said he was touched by the way the campus community handled this difficult situation and came together to express care and concern for Dwight, his family, and friends.

**Board of Trustees**

Ramiro Espinoza  
Betti Fujikado, Secretary  
Dennis Madsen, Chair  
Ralph Munro, Vice Chair  
Phil Sharpe  
Peggy Zoro

**Western Washington University**

Bruce Shepard, President  
Suzanne Baker, Interim Secretary to the Board of Trustees  
Wendy Bohlke, Assistant Attorney General  
Stephanie Bowers, Vice President for University Advancement  
Sherry Burkey, Associate Vice President for University Relations  
Paul Cocke, Director, University Communications  
Eileen Coughlin, Vice President for Student Affairs and Academic Support Services  
Paul Dunn, Senior Executive Assistant to the President  
Paula Gilman, Executive Director for University Planning and Budgeting  
Scott Pearce, President, Faculty Senate  
Catherine Riordan, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Barbara Stoneberg, Assistant to the President  
Steve Swan, Vice President for University Relations  
Richard Van Den Hul, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs  
Colin Watrin, President, Associated Students

**Guests**

University Planning and Resources Council  
Legislative Panel:  
Rep. Reuven Carlyle  
Rep. Doug Ericksen  
Rep. Kelli Linville  
Rep. Mike Sells

## 2. SPECIAL REPORTS

### a) Updating Western's Strategic Plan

Chair Madsen welcomed the University Planning and Resources Council (UPRC) and said that the Board was pleased to participate in a strategic discussion about the university.

President Shepard said that the Board has been clear the strategic focus must be owned by the university and it cannot be top-down. He said the plan is to have a strategic focus drafted for the December Board meeting for final review. In preparation for that meeting, this preliminary discussion with the Board and UPRC was planned. The President referred the Board to UPRC's draft Mission, Vision, and Strategic Goals handed out at the meeting. He asked UPRC Chair Jeff Newcomer to make comments and open up the discussion to the group.

Newcomer thanked the President for coordinating the discussion and thanked the Board for their time. He noted that the new draft plan is considerably shorter than the older plan. He said it is a strategic plan that stops at the level of strategy and doesn't go further, allowing the university units to develop as appropriate for their areas. Newcomer stressed that the plan has changed from looking inward to looking outward and how we can better help communities around the state and beyond. Newcomer credited the UPRC subcommittee, a committee of seven, for their work on the initial draft.

Trustee Zoro asked how the group determined the four strategic goals. Newcomer said that President Shepard's convocation speech noted four strategies and the subcommittee began their work with those four strategies.

UPRC member Brad Johnson, Chair of Physics and Astronomy Department, said the group took the ideas they heard repeatedly on the brevity of a mission, vision, and a strategic goal statement and included items heard at various forums. The group also looked at strategic goals, vision, and mission statements at other universities.

Trustee Fujikado said she was impressed when comparing the old plan to the new one and commended the group for making it shorter and more condensed. She asked for further discussion of the first goal, *Build upon Western's strengths in areas of critical need to the State of Washington*. She asked for background and what tactics are associated with it.

Newcomer said that the first goal refers to expanding baccalaureate opportunities, building on Western's strength as a strong liberal arts university, and preparing graduates for future opportunities. The goal also acknowledges the state's desire to increase capacity.

Hart Hodges, Economics, said that Western provides much in the way of economic development for the state, not only the educational piece but also for outreach.

Trustee Zoro emphasized the importance of the university to factor in education as a component of economic development to better compete globally. She said that education often is the driver of an economic recovery by developing innovation and highly skilled workers. Zoro asked if that could be built upon in the first strategic goal.

Trustee Munro agreed with Trustee Zoro's comments. The group further discussed incorporating a global component to the mission, vision, and strategic goals. President Shepard suggested adding "global destination" to the vision statement.

Trustee Zoro asked how the education a student receives at Western competes with other educational systems globally and how do we evaluate the education students get here. Associated Student President Watrin said that time and time again Western is recognized for its graduate programs and providing a great liberal arts education.

Faculty Senate President Pearce asked the Board how they see the evolution of the institution from a regional university to where it will be in the next ten or 20 years.

Trustee Fujikado said that the draft strategic plan gets to the heart of what it means to be a publicly purposed university. She said she thinks of the phrase: *Think global, act local*. She said because Western excels in liberal arts education, it knows how to bring community together and reach out expansively. She thinks it is a good thing to say that Western will build a stronger Washington by being a global destination of learning expertise and societal problem solving.

Chair Madsen agreed saying he supports an overarching vision that stretches an organization outside of its comfort zone. He said he likes the idea of going global with Western's message.

Barbara Mathers-Schmidt, Communication Sciences Disorders, said that the new guidelines provide creativity, reaches outward to the world, and provides for growth and involvement within the units.

Keith Hyatt, Special Education, said that he didn't find the last strategic plan useful. He discussed how the new plan can be used in his area. Trustee Munro commented that Western has been a leader in special education and in producing excellent teachers. He said that being global can benefit the State of Washington.

Trustee Sharpe said the draft plan provides three things: it serves, it brings together, it develops. He said there are advantages of having a succinct strategic plan and he likes the direction of the plan, but questioned the content.

Trustee Espinoza noted that the word "student" is not included in the document. Faculty Senate President Pearce said that the word "learner" was used in place of student. President Shepard said that he preferred learners since the university is not a teaching institution but a learning institution, which is a fundamental change from before.

President Shepard said that the proposed document allows flexibility. He explained that the difficulty in listing activities is that you lose the ability to engage creatively and, also, when the environment changes, the new ideas might not fit with the strategic plan. This document allows the ability to adapt to a constantly shifting and changing environment.

Madsen reflected on the global concept and asked for clarification. Is our intention to have a global impact and will we claim the global territory? President Shepard noted the distinction in the wording. He said there are universities who establish global impact as a goal up front, which leads to a very different kind of university with a particular set of programs. He said that Western's proposed plan creates a global dimension as a means to the end, which is different from having the goal up front. Shepard said that he and Trustee Munro are in agreement, seeing a global dimension as building a stronger Washington.

Susan Banton, Classified Staff Representative, said that rather than a shift to an international focus on students and studies, she sees Western individuals themselves having the impact globally in their learning.

Provost Riordan said what she likes about this plan is that even as succinct as it is, it gives a suggestion of the kinds of things the university will not do. She liked building on existing strengths, which successful organizations do. She said the new strategic focus builds on Western's environment and coastal resources. She said the message is that Western continues to be a stellar example of undergraduate education, where students can obtain access to the best programs and graduate in a fiscally responsible way.

Trustee Munro asked about the border and the university's proximity to the Canadian border. The Provost said that might be a subject that could be discussed in more detail when talking about the Border Policy Research Institute or the Canadian Studies Program.

Regarding the first strategic goal of Western's strengths, Madsen asked if the strategic plan could include strengths and opportunities or if you think it doesn't belong here? He suggested the possibility of a set of goals that includes numbers. President Shepard said that type of information is available in many places, and that he thinks including that information would place constraints on the strategic focus.

Trustee Zoro clarified that each unit would use their own creativity in how they interpret the plan. President Shepard confirmed and called it a radical step for the university. Zoro said it was outstanding work. She said she could envision each unit developing and creating from the base plan and that it is not limiting.

Chair Madsen lauded the university for developing a succinct and easy to comprehend strategic plan.

Trustee Munro asked what the next steps are. Newcomer said that the Colleges would work on their own strategic plans and the departments would develop operational plans and tactics to fit with the college plans. Newcomer said by keeping a university plan with a simple model, it moves people away from notion that the only way something gets valued is if its listed feeling they have to list everything. He said credit goes to the sub-committee that pared the proposed plan into a set of concise statements. The proposed plan frees the units to do the same and frees them to say the things are they want to do.

Newcomer said that UPRC would debrief at their meeting next week, then release a draft to the campus community for comment. They will bring it back to committee and intend to release one more draft in early November. UPRC plans on finishing the document before Thanksgiving, so it can go to the Faculty Senate and President's Cabinet before it comes back to the Board in December.

Chair Madsen thanked UPRC for its good work and looks forward to seeing the next version.

At 3:55 p.m. Madsen announced a five minute break. Meeting reconvened at 4:05 p.m.

## **b) Higher Education in Washington State**

Chair Madsen welcomed the legislative panel. President Shepard thanked the legislators for their work on behalf of Washington citizens. He said the meeting session is an annual opportunity to debrief with legislators to discuss what worked and what didn't in Olympia.

Board members and staff introduced themselves to the legislative panel.

Representative Linville, 42nd District, introduced herself. Linville, a Western graduate, commended the university's work on a strategic plan.

Representative Carlyle, 36th legislative district Seattle, serves on the Higher Education Committee and on the Education Appropriations Committee and Technology. He grew up in Bellingham and participated in Summer Stock as a child. He talked about seizing the opportunity of the economic crisis and developing a conversation driven by outcomes and results as opposed to measuring inputs.

Representative Ericksen, 42nd legislative district, also grew up in Bellingham. He provided his thoughts on likely outcomes of the November 2, 2010 election. He said that there would not be significant tax increases, and because of that the affects to higher education would likely require a raise in tuition costs.

Representative Sells, 38th legislative district, Snohomish County. He said the issues for next session will include tuition and tuition-setting authority. He discussed restructuring governance at the state level and the relationship between the Higher Education Coordinating Board and the university system.

Trustee Munro asked if there are things going on in the caucus that we should be recognizant of as it relates to higher education. Ericksen responded that it is crucial to downsize other parts of state government to be able to refocus on higher education.

President Shepard said that Western's bottom-line cut is \$17.2 million dollars. He commented that one of the inefficiencies he sees is the time spent on accountability reports. He asked if it would be helpful for Western, working with other higher education constituents or craft our own legislation. Linville said that would be a good idea.

Trustee Sharpe spoke about the increase in risks that the university assumes with the budget cuts and threatening quality.

Shepard said that the university must be held accountable for results, but suggested that legislators communicate to the university how to deliver on those results. Linville said that it would be helpful for the institution to create a list of what types of processes can be eliminated.

Carlyle encouraged the university to list types of regulatory relief and communicate them to the legislators. He said the idea that the two- and four-year higher education systems are at odds is counterproductive. He emphasized there must be a common agenda and a sense of how higher education is viewed, and to provide the legislature with troubleshooting and solutions.

Carlyle said that there is a public responsibility to educate people. He said that there is an attack on the core civic engagement of democracy if dismantling higher education is

allowed. It's not just a budget issue but a structural systemic issue. He gave examples of student retention difficulties that all higher education institutions face and faculty issues as examples of systemic issues. He hopes that by embracing structural changes and embracing the opportunities of the budget crisis that Western partners with legislators to put the real issues that you are struggling with on the table.

Sharpe asked for suggestions on working with government officials to explain that the state does an excellent job at producing workers, but we are lacking and fall behind in our ability to produce innovators, managers, and executives. He said this is the deficiency in the state's education system.

Burkey said it is a systemic decision by the legislature to fund two-year schools with the highest funding of community colleges in the country in Washington State, in terms of number of students served and the lowest percentage of our residents with access to baccalaureate degrees in the country. Yet, she said, it seems that this issue is off- the-table in terms of conversation, and it seems the decision of the state to not fund opportunities for baccalaureate degrees.

Bill Lyne, Faculty Associate to the President and Provost, said that Washington State is one of the highest importers of baccalaureate degrees in the country. He said that the Governor's Task Force expressed little concern of this problem. The people who are being excluded from the best job opportunities in the state, are people who are middleclass and below who happen to have the misfortune to being born here. He said that this is another conversation never gets on the table.

Linville said that Washington's educational system should be driven by what we need. If we need more baccalaureate students because we need to fill those niches of employment that we are importing, then that should be part of what is in the outcome base of how we fund higher education. The legislators need you to talk about what we're trying to achieve—like a better balance in the kinds of degrees that will make people of our state more qualified for all the jobs in Washington State.

Madsen said that the economic problems are severe and the university has had to either suspend or eliminate quality programs. He said that Western wants to work with legislators to create messages that will resonate with the state, so we can reverse this trend. If it continues on the path we are on, it will impact the quality of this institution over the next four- to six-year period.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.