

**Western Washington University  
Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes  
Friday, October 8, 2021**

**3. CALL TO ORDER**

Board Chair, Trustee John M. Meyer called the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University to order at 8:01 a.m., via Zoom. A quorum was established by roll call.

**Board of Trustees**

John M. Meyer, Chair  
Chase Franklin, Vice Chair – *via Zoom*  
Sue Sharpe, Secretary  
Karen Lee  
Faith Pettis  
Nate Jo  
Mo West

**Western Washington University**

Sabah Randhawa, President  
Joyce Lopes, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs  
Kim O'Neill, Vice President for Advancement  
Melynda Huskey, Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services  
Donna Gibbs, Vice President for University Relations and Marketing  
Brent Carbajal, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Becca Kenna-Schenk, Executive Director, Government Relations  
Shirin Deylami, Faculty Senate President  
Melissa Nelson, Assistant Attorney General  
Paul Cocke, Director, Communications and Marketing  
Paul Dunn, Chief of Staff to the President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees  
Barbara Sandoval, Senior Executive Assistant to the President  
Rayne Rambo, Assistant Secretary to the Board of Trustees

**4. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 8:02 a.m. the board went into Executive Session for approximately forty-five minutes to discuss personnel matters as authorized by RCW 42.30.110. No action was taken in executive session.

Chair Meyer announced the board would go back into open session at 9:03 a.m.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MOTION 10-01-2021

Trustee Jo moved that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, upon the recommendation of the President, approve the following minutes:

- Board of Trustees Meeting, August 20, 2021

The motion was voted on by roll call.

Roll Call for the Vote:

Trustee Sue Sharpe - Yes  
Trustee Karen Lee – Yes  
Trustee Faith Pettis – Yes  
Trustee Mo West – Yes  
Trustee Nate Jo - Yes  
Trustee Chase Franklin – Yes  
Trustee John Meyer, Chair - Yes

The motion passed.

## **6. PUBLIC COMMENT**

As per Amended RCW 28B.35.110, the Board of Trustees provided time for public comment. Three people signed up for public comment. Four people made comments on the final recommendation report from the Legacy Review Task Force submitted to President Randhawa on June 14, 2021. (available here: <https://president.wvu.edu/legacy-review-task-force>).

## **7. BOARD CHAIR REPORT**

Board Chair, John Meyer, reported that one of the most important responsibilities of a trustee is reviewing and evaluating the President's performance. He said the Board typically conducts the annual review over the summer and engages a significant number of on- and off-campus stakeholders in a feedback process to gain the broadest perspective. Meyer reported that stakeholders from campus included a cross section of administrative leaders from different divisions of the university, the presidents of the Faculty Senate, Faculty Union, Classified Staff Unions, Professional Staff Organization, and the Associated Students, as well as the chairs of the Western Foundation and Alumni Boards. He added that off campus stakeholders included local and state elected representatives.

Meyer acknowledged that through a combination of surveys and interviews, the Board inquired about President Randhawa's performance over the past year in several categories, including navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion, and sustaining the fiscal stability of the institution. Respondents were also asked to provide their thoughts about what they would like to see him address in the coming year.

Meyer concluded that the feedback received was very positive, and the Trustees appreciated the candid conversation with President Randhawa during his time with the Board to review his performance. Meyer thanked President Randhawa for his service and said the Trustees continue to be grateful for his leadership and performance during a very challenging year for Western.

Board Chair Meyer reported that the Board of Trustees engaged in an off-site Work Session in September where the Trustees were able to engage in discussion regarding the Legacy Review Task Force's report and recommendations to President Randhawa. He noted the Trustees looked forward to another discussion later in the day's agenda on this important topic.

## **8. UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

President Randhawa acknowledged and thanked the Trustees for attending the Alma Clark Glass Hall Residence Hall dedication ceremony the day prior to honor Western's first Black student, Alma Clark Glass. He noted that the residence hall project was a success on many levels and that Western will continue to move forward with its commitments of advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in alignment with student success.

Randhawa reported that Western began fall quarter classes with a hybrid style setting with in-person teaching and virtual classes as we continue to navigate through a global pandemic. He noted that due to a rise in variant COVID-strains, Western continues to work in conjunction with the State Health Department and county leadership to ensure Western's campus locations are safe for all students, faculty, and staff.

Randhawa noted that Western leadership, including the President's Cabinet and college academic deans recently gathered to contemplate and discuss the effects of the pandemic on pursuing the top strategic plan goals for Western, such as increase inclusive student success, enrollments, retention, and academic excellence. The group reaffirmed the urgency of continuing to pursue those goals as central to Western's mission and found much to discuss about lessons learned and potential silver linings from the pandemic.

Randhawa reported that Western will receive a gift of one million dollars committed from Roy Hansen, alumnus of Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies, that will create a music recording studio that can be used by all Western students for creative endeavors.

Randhawa noted that a search committee to find a successor for Provost Brent Carbajal, who will retire in 2022, will be co-chaired by Joyce Lopes, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs and Brian Burton, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. Randhawa added that Western will also soon be launching a search for its first Chief Diversity Officer and Executive Director, Office of Equity, to be chaired by Provost Carbajal.

## **9. FACULTY SENATE REPORT**

Shirin Deylami, Faculty Senate President reported the following: "Good morning. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak today. As you can imagine as the quarter has begun, faculty have been excited to get to work and be with students in person. I can only speak for myself when I say it has been an absolute pleasure being back in the classroom. Of course, there have been some hiccups along the way but overall, we are seeing a vibrant and excited campus.

This week I had the pleasure of facilitating our first Senate meeting and we discussed some important issues that we must tackle right away and some long-term planning. Perhaps the most pressing issue for us this quarter is the distribution of course evaluations. As a reminder, during the pandemic period when all or most courses were taught remotely, the Faculty Senate recommended a simple online form to be distributed for all courses. With the help of the University Office of Research, these have been the course evaluations we have used for the last 18 months. Unfortunately, the return rate of these course evaluations has been significantly lower than in person evaluations. As fall quarter, began we also learned that the previous technology utilized to read the scantron portion of the in-person course evaluations no longer work. We are now working out how to provide course evaluations for both are online and in person courses.

This relatively small hiccup in the course evaluation process has led to larger discussion about both the content and medium of evaluations as we move forward. At best, course evaluations are a way through which students can provide feedback about what works and doesn't work in a course and as a way for faculty to understand where they might improve, change, or expand on content and assignments. At their worst, however, course evaluations can be a space for students to express personal grievances over grades or disagreement with the instructor. In addition, multiple studies have shown severe bias against faculty from marginalized identities including faculty of color, queer faculty, and women. This of course, is a real problem given that many departments and colleges utilize course evaluations as a mechanism to determine the quality of an instructors teaching, especially for issues of tenure and promotion and contract renewal. The goal for faculty senate this year, is to think critically about the course evaluation process and the content of course evaluations, something that has been left aside for a little too long.

In addition, to course evaluations. Faculty Senate alongside the Academic Coordinating Commission plans to facilitate some university-wide conversations about the role of online education at Western. While all of us moved to an online modality because of the pandemic, faculty have real disagreements about whether online education should be a substantive part of our offerings as a university. This, from my perspective, is not simply a pedagogical disagreement but one about the very nature of the university. I look forward to reporting back to you about what comes out of those conversations.

Finally, I want to alert you to some positive changes we hope to see in the University Planning and Resources Council. For a while now faculty and staff that serve on UPRC have felt that their time and input has not been used to the fullest degree. Under the chairpersonship of Allison Giffen, UPRC is hoping to expand their place in conversations about resource allocation by asking for a bigger and more nuanced picture of the financial health of the university. It is critical for us to see the budget process as a shared space in which all constituents participate but also to hold ourselves accountable for what the university spends its money on. And I think most importantly, UPRC really wants to shift the conversation about how resources are allocated from a needs-based approach to one that both considers need but also innovation/vision. As I hope you will agree, what makes Western such a well-regarded university is our innovative spirit and that we are often ahead of the curve. Putting money toward expanding programs and offerings is just as crucial as taking care of the needs that come up.

At the next meeting I hope to provide you substantive updates on the work of Senate as well the Senate subcommittees. As a side note, I had the pleasure, with most of you, to see Glass Hall yesterday and I was just awed by both the structure and spirit of the space. We often don't think about how spaces help to determine our shared reality and commitments, but the accomplishment that is Glass Hall reminds us how much it matters for our spaces and our culture to be truly inclusive."

## **10. ASSOCIATED STUDENTS REPORT & WELCOMING NEW AS LEADERSHIP**

Glory Basic, Associated Students President, introduced the 2021-2022 Associated Students (AS) Executive Board that included Mallory Schaeffbauer, AS Vice President for Activities, Naira Gonzales, AS Vice President for Diversity, Ankur Handa, AS Vice President for Governmental Affairs, Jasmine Fast AS Vice President for Student Services, Laura Wagner, AS Vice President for Sustainability, and Brenner Barclay who serves as the AS Student Senate President.

Basic and the Executive Board reported their shared goals of the Associated Student for the year ahead that included facilitating communication of student needs, upholding the demands of the Black Student Union, supporting student life for traditional and non-traditional students, and working towards a campus cultural of shared governance.

## **11. BOARD FINANCE, AUDIT, AND ENTERPRISE RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Trustee Faith Pettis, Chair, Finance, Audit, and Enterprise Risk Management (FARM) Committee reported that the committee did not meet in September at its regularly scheduled time and instead was provided an interim update report from Joyce Lope, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs which included an overview of the President's expense audit, a capital budget update, overview of the refunding of the student recreation center bonds, Clery Act follow up report, and Treasury report and investment portfolio.

## **12. BOARD STUDENT SUCCESS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Trustee Mo West, Chair, Student Success Committee, (SSC) reported that the committee decided to move the regularly scheduled Student Success Committee meeting back to align with the regular meetings of the Board of Trustees. West noted that the committee discussed topics for discussion for the upcoming year that included, student access and retention, expansion of the graduate school, and Outreach and Continuing Education programs.

West reported that advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will continue to be a top priority of the Student Success Committee. She added that the committee plans to continue to examine data and metrics throughout the year to monitor progress and to strive to meet the strategic goals and objectives detailed in the Strategic Plan.

## **13. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY FOR REFINANCING STUDENT RECREATION FEE REVENUE REFUNDING BONDS, RESOLUTION MO. 2021-06**

Joyce Lopes, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs reported that the economic impacts of COVID-19 continue to be significant but have also led to historically low interest rates. She noted that the low interest rates have provided the Wade King Student Recreation Center with the opportunity to reduce the cost of the Recreation Center debt. She said over the life of the remaining outstanding bonds, the Wade King Student Recreation Center has the potential of saving \$2.7 million in debt service payments or 14.95% net present value savings. She explained that Resolution No. 2021-06 would delegate authority to President Randhawa of the Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs to determine the federal tax status, and method, timing, and details of the Bonds sale. She added that the authority to issue the Bonds under the Bond Resolution expires on June 30, 2022.

Lopes concluded that the authority for the delegated actions is subject to a minimum savings target of 3.00%, not to exceed the aggregate principal amount of \$19.2 million and a maximum term not to exceed 15 years.

MOTION 10-02-2021

Trustee Pettis moved that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, upon the recommendation of the President, adopt Resolution No. 2021-06 authorizing the sale of Student Recreation Fee Revenue Refunding Bonds, Series 2022, including delegation of authority as outlined in Resolution 2021-06.

The motion was voted on by roll call.



noted that the LRTF was charged with reviewing reports from Western Libraries Heritage Resources on the history and significance of building names on Western's Bellingham campus, to commission additional research as needed, and to make recommendations as to whether the names of particular buildings warrant consideration for removal. Additional consideration was to be given to the review of the name of the Huxley College of the Environment. In addition to requesting additional reports on the naming of Huxley College, the LRTF invited four scholars with expertise on T.H. Huxley and the intellectual history of his era to contribute their thoughts about Huxley's personal legacy. Meyer noted that the trustees realize the significance of retaining or removing a name from a building or college, and that members of the Western community hold strong views on different sides of the issues, particularly regarding Huxley College, some of which were expressed during public comment earlier in the meeting. He noted that all perspectives are being considered seriously and that the input has been appreciated throughout the legacy review process.

Board Chair Meyer re-iterated the importance of the decision-making process and on behalf of the entire Board, underscored the importance of having a transparent and deliberative review process. He noted that people of good will can and will disagree about these issues, and that it is likely that any decision the Board of Trustees make on the LRTF recommendations will be met with some disagreement. However, Meyer continued to say that if the Board takes the time to have adequate, open, conversations, people on both sides will appreciate the integrity of the process.

Meyer reported that the Board of Trustees met in September 2021 for a Work Session in which the Board had a preliminary discussion about the LRTF report and recommendations that determined that additional resources were needed for the board to make more of a substantive decision. He noted the Board requested additional information on Edward T. Mathes, the namesake of Mathes Hall, from Western Libraries Heritage Resources. Meyer thanked Heritage Resources for their quick response in producing additional research, which has been posted to <https://president.wvu.edu/responses-report-additional-information>.

The Board of Trustees and those present continued with a substantive discussion about principles and criteria for removing or retaining the name on a named feature of Western's campus and how they could be applied to deliver decisions on the four recommendations presently being discussed.

Paul Dunn, Chief of Staff to the President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees, who also served on the LRTF, elaborated the principles included in the task force charge used to propel their individual recommendations that included: The harm caused by retaining the name, the potential harms or renaming, and considering and weighing relevant factors.

After long and frank discussion Board Chair Meyer thanked everyone for their input today and during the entire process. He suggested that a small subcommittee of trustees be convened before the next meeting to further discuss the principles of renaming and make a recommendation to the board as to how best to proceed. He reiterated that the process is paramount and important for everyone to reflect further on the conversation at hand, especially for the trustees. Chair Meyer proposed that the conversation be revitalized at the next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees in December 2021.

## **16. INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **a. Enrollment Management Summary**

Vice President Huskey provided a written report regarding the university's general enrollment and admissions

**b. University Advancement Report**

Vice President O'Neill provided a written report on the University's Alumni Relations and Western's Foundation activities.

**c. Capital Program Report**

Vice President Lopes provided a written report on the University's capital projects.

**d. University Relations and Marketing Report**

Vice President Gibbs provided a written report documenting recent activities of University Relations and Marketing.

**17. TRUSTEE REMARKS**

The trustees thanked everyone in attendance for their participation and the thoroughness of the meeting materials.

**18. DATES FOR NEXT MEETING**

December 9 & 10, 2021

**19. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 12:08 p.m.