

**Western Washington University
Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 9, 2021**

1. 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 3:01 p.m., in the Old Main 340 Board Room. A quorum was established by roll call.

Board of Trustees

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

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
Melissa Nelson, Assistant Attorney General
Shirin Deylami, Faculty Senate President
Glory Busic, Associated Students President
Paul Cocke, Director, Communications and Marketing
Paul Dunn, Chief of Staff to the President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees
Rayne Rambo, Assistant Secretary to the Board of Trustees

2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERTAINING TO LEGACY REVIEW

In preparation of the final review of the work of the Legacy Review Task Force, the Board of Trustees agreed to dedicate a separate Public Comment Period to comment on the work of the Legacy Review Task Force. There were eight individuals who signed up for the Public Comment period all pertaining to the re-naming of Huxley College of the Environment and one comment dedicated to Haggard Hall.

All materials and public submissions presented to the Legacy Review Task Force can be found at: <https://president.wwu.edu/legacy-review-taskforce>

Chair Meyer thanked everyone for their comments and for taking the time to be present for this important conversation. He recognized that the topic at hand is controversial, and that people of good will can disagree about the right decision. He added that regardless of the differences of opinion that may be had about the recommendations, it is important to be united in the desire to support Western's past, present, and future.

3. LEGACY REVIEW TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Board Chair, Trustee John Meyer noted that the day's agenda would be dedicated to the continued discussion of the Legacy Review Task Force Report and Recommendations which were submitted to President Randhawa in June 2021. Meyer explained the Board of Trustees first began their discussion of the recommendations at its regular meeting in August 2021 and continued the discussion at the Board annual work session in September 2021 and the October 2021 regular meeting. Meyer explained that the Board of Trustees decided to convene an Ad Hoc committee to take a deeper dive into the materials presented to the Board up until that point in time. Meyer highlighted that the Ad Hoc committee produced a set of documents and recommendations, including several draft resolutions to structure the full Board of Trustees conversation at the present meeting. Meyer acknowledged that the recommendation of the Ad Hoc committee is to remove the Huxley name from the College of the Environment and to retain the names on Haggard Hall and Mathes Hall.

Trustee Faith Pettis acknowledged the expertise of the many scholars who contributed their knowledge and research and noted she was persuaded by the materials submitted after the work of the Legacy Review Task Force report was distributed, specifically debunking some of the materials that were initially distributed about T.S. Huxley and help to explain the complexity his legacy and effects on history. Pettis noted that this process has been in no way to smear the reputation or legacy of such a distinguished researcher and scientist. T.S. Huxley will continue to be an important person in science and history, however his historical ties to Western are very remote, if at all, and that the role of the Board of Trustees is trying to determine what is in the best interest of Western, Western's history and legacy going forward.

Trustee Karen Lee also thanked everyone who has participated in the Legacy Review process and for those that presented during the public comment period provided at the start of this meeting. Lee reiterated that history should not be erased and that smearing one of history's great scientists is inappropriate. Lee stated that "we can't always look through the eyes of today about how people thought a century before us." Lee noted that she had a different opinion from Trustee Pettis with regards to actual language from an essay that Huxley wrote in 1865 that states, "it might be quite true that some Negroes are better than some white men, but no rational man, cognizant of the facts, believes that the average negro is the equal, still less the superior of the average white man". Lee recommended that Western consider the name of the college of the environment in a way that encompasses all the students that might study there, the faculty that teach there, the staff who work there, and the administration. She added that it is harmful to name a building or college after someone who stated that certain people are inferior. She added that the Huxley statement in the essay should not diminish other achievements in his life, but simply put it is not appropriate for Western and its communities. She concluded by adding that is unfortunate that this has been a divisive issue, but that Western will benefit for removing the Huxley name from the College of the Environment.

President Randhawa read this prepared statement into the record:

"The matter of de-naming the three fixtures identified by the Legacy Review Task force, is complex, to say the least. During the fall term, I have spent considerable time studying the research and recommendations from the Legacy Review Task Force and the information that has been received since the task force report was submitted. The Huxley matter has consumed much of this time.

I participated in the deliberations of the Board of Trustees over the past several months, as Trustees made a genuine effort to understand the background and legacy of names associated with each of the fixtures. I think it is important for me to share with the Western community and our external

partners that the trustees undertook this work extremely seriously, recognizing the importance of their decisions on Western's mission, work, collaborations, and reputation, and on our students—current and future.

To the matter of Huxley, I agree with and support the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Board to remove the Huxley name from Huxley College of the Environment (changing the name to College of the Environment). For me, the most important reason for de-naming is the lack of connection between Western Washington University and Huxley.

I recognize the intense debate around Huxley's legacy, both within the college and external to the university. At the end of the day, however, what is important is not the name, but the ideals that we are promoting in the college and the university.

When I think about our work at Western and in the college, two notions stand out:

One, the notion of equity and inclusion: that every person is endowed with human potential, and as educators it is our responsibility to nurture that potential. We also want to make education, specifically science education—the focus of the college, accessible to students who have been historically disadvantaged in this process.

Two, the notion of scholarly inquiry: this process is important to us as researchers and scientists, and our work is based on furthering that process and using it in our basic and translational research activities and in our scholarly work. It is also a method and approach to the world that we try to inculcate in students and model for society in general. We hope that the students we educate and mentor will use this inquiry process as they assess and engage with the complex societal issues they face in their lives.

More importantly, these two notions are not an either-or proposition. We need to work to advance both these notions simultaneously. Indeed, I think these overlapping ideas are at the heart of what it means to advance inclusive access and success in higher education in the current environment: creating more opportunities for all people to actualize their human potential and be empowered by the powerful methods of inquiry and critical thinking that have defined the distinctive work of academic institutions. I would like to believe that this is a commitment we all share at Western.

I also want to acknowledge that a name change may create a loss of connection and identity for some of our alumni and external stakeholders. As we engage with our external partners, it is important to remember that the excellence of the college—and there's so much to be proud of—is driven by people: the research and mentorship of faculty, the impact our alumni make, and the drive for a better world that our students bring to the college. This is also an exciting time for the college: We are recruiting a new dean, and I have heard from several members of the college about the opportunity to revisit the college's strategic plan and re-envision new possibilities. The involvement of our external stakeholders in this activity will both engage them in the future of the college and enrich our internal conversations.

Chair Meyer, thank you for giving me this extended time. I know the college has been involved in a spirited debate about this name issue, because I believe the faculty and other members of the college community really care for the college. Once the Board makes its decision, I am confident that the College will come together to engage in a dialogue on how we further enhance the work and impact of the college.”

Trustee Meyer thanked everyone for the robust discussion and moved to proceed with the Resolutions that had been prepared for approval.

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-06

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

**REMOVING THE THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY NAME FROM THE COLLEGE OF THE
ENVIRONMENT**

WHEREAS, Western Washington University is committed to providing access to transformational higher education for the people of the State of Washington, pursuing justice and equity in its policies and practices, and supporting an inclusive and welcoming campus environment that celebrates the dignity and value of all students, faculty, and staff; and

WHEREAS, at the start of Winter Quarter of 2021, President Sabah Randhawa charged a Legacy Review Task Force composed of faculty, staff, students, and alumni to review the history and significance of building and college names at Western Washington University, and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees as to whether any names warrant consideration for removal; and

WHEREAS, the Legacy Review Task Force submitted its report and recommendations in June of 2021, and has the gratitude and appreciation of the Board of Trustees for its efforts on behalf of the institution; and

WHEREAS, Western's 2018 – 2025 Strategic Plan acknowledges Western has failed to meet the needs of people of many races, ethnicities, creeds, socioeconomic classes, gender identities, sexual orientations, and disability statuses, and states Western will contribute to redressing these inequities by transforming policies, structures, and practices to ensure meaningful inclusion; and

WHEREAS, a letter submitted by the leaders of Black student organizations in June 2020 expressed an urgent desire to see Western consider how the names of its buildings fail to support the experiences of Black and other students of diverse identities; and

WHEREAS, the Huxley College of the Environment was founded in 1969 as one of the first environmental colleges in the country, earning international renown for continued leadership in environmental education, applied research and outreach, and contributing to the excellence and reputation of the University as a whole; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Henry Huxley (1825 – 1895) was an accomplished anatomical biologist, prolific author, and public speaker, known most widely for his outspoken defense of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection, and was an abolitionist and a champion of progressive education reform, campaigning for universal education and the introduction of science into curricula; and

WHEREAS, Huxley expressed views about Black people in works such as "Emancipation Black and White" that are offensive, hurtful, and out of step with the institution's mission and values; and

WHEREAS, Huxley's application of the theory of evolution to humans in his work, "Man's Place in Nature" may be understood as implying or providing support for racial hierarchy and scientific racism; and

WHEREAS, some students of color at Western have stated that they consider the naming of the College after Huxley as an instance of callous indifference to their experience as traditionally underserved students, and in contradiction to the institution's claims to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment; and

WHEREAS, the College of the Environment came to be named after Huxley through an informal process by which several faculty and administrators began applying the name to the college for several years while it was still under development, creating a common usage and a presumption that it would be named Huxley College by the time it came to the Board of Trustees for approval; and

WHEREAS, the excellence of the College of the Environment has not been due to the Huxley name, but rather to generations of passionate and committed faculty, students, and alumni, united around a vision of addressing urgent environmental issues, developing practical, collaborative approaches to solving environmental problems, and supporting movements for environmental social justice; and

WHEREAS, neither Thomas Henry Huxley nor his descendants have any relationship to the development or mission of the College of the Environment or Western Washington University, having made no financial, service, scholarly, or other contributions to the College or the University; and

WHEREAS, the Huxley name was therefore chosen to represent the College of the Environment largely on the basis of an assessment of Huxley's character and a set of values he represented relevant to the academic enterprise at Western Washington University in 1969; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees recognizes the complexities of evaluating Huxley's legacy, and that there are a great many contextualizing factors and nuances involved in the interpretation and assessment of an individual's statements and behavior in their time and place; and

WHEREAS, the complexities of the situation present a choice between defending the honor of an individual who has made no contribution to the institution by contextualizing the racism in his statements, or acknowledging that, despite Huxley's other qualities, he is not the person to represent the institution's present day values; and

WHEREAS, the Huxley name no longer serves to advance the goals of the University, or to make it a more welcoming and inclusive place for the increasingly diverse students and faculty the College and the University as a whole strive to attract and serve; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees recognizes that while removing a name has powerful symbolic value, it is critically important to follow such statements with concrete, measurable efforts to increase inclusive success for underrepresented students, faculty, and staff;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, that the name of Thomas Henry Huxley be removed from the College of the Environment at Western Washington University.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University at its meeting on December 9, 2021.

MOTION 12-06-2021

Trustees Franklin moved that the Board of Trustees approve Resolution 2021-06 to Removing the Huxley name from the College of the Environment.

The motion passed.

Chair Meyer introduced the next recommendation of the Legacy Review Task Force Task that included the review of removing the name of former President William Wade Haggard from Haggard Hall. Meyer reported that five of the Task Force members voted to recommend to remove the name and four members voted to recommend maintaining the name.

Meyer acknowledged that the Board of Trustees reviewed the report provided by the Legacy Review Task Force in addition to the letters provided by Legacy Review Task Force members, former Trustee Phil Sharpe and Paul Dunn, Chief of Staff to the President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees who expressed disagreement with the report's conclusions on W.W. Haggard. Meyer noted that the Board of Trustees Ad Hoc committee prepared an additional findings of fact document, and a recommendation that the Haggard name be maintained on Haggard Hall.

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-07

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

MAINTAINING THE NAME OF HAGGARD HALL

WHEREAS, Western Washington University is committed to providing access to transformational higher education for the people of the State of Washington, pursuing justice and equity in its policies and practices, and supporting an inclusive and welcoming campus environment that celebrates the dignity and value of all students, faculty, and staff; and

WHEREAS, at the start of the Winter Quarter of 2021, President Sabah Randhawa charged a Legacy Review Task Force composed of faculty, staff, students, and alumni to review the history and significance of building and college names at Western Washington University, and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees as to whether any names warrant consideration for removal; and

WHEREAS, the Legacy Review Task Force submitted its report and recommendations in June of 2021 and has the gratitude and appreciation of the Board of Trustees for its efforts on behalf of the institution; and

WHEREAS, William Wade Haggard (1892-1977) served as president of Western from 1939 to 1959, the longest tenure of any president; and

WHEREAS, Haggard guided the institution through the Second World War, first witnessing a decline in student numbers, and the rise in enrollment that followed; and

WHEREAS, during Haggard's 20-year tenure he oversaw a period of institutional transformation from a normal school, the primary purpose of which was to educate K-8 teachers, to a College of Education for educating K-12 teachers, laying the groundwork for further transition to becoming a liberal arts college; and

WHEREAS, following the tumultuous firing of his predecessor, President Charles Fisher, Haggard restored morale and confidence among the faculty, relationships with the community, and enhanced the reputation of the institution with a series of summer conferences led by renowned educators from across the country; and

WHEREAS, Haggard can be credited with hiring and supporting faculty members who become critical to Western's growth and development over the course of his 20 years of service, increasing

faculty from 61 to 137, and the hiring of Western's first African American faculty member, Eunice Day Lee, in 1959; and

WHEREAS, Haggard viewed the construction of a Science Building as a critical step in the evolution of Western from being a College of Education to a State College, taking a deep personal interest in the building when planning began in 1954, and personally taking the project to the Legislature in 1957, where he was able to secure funding for its design, construction, and outfitting; and

WHEREAS, this building, originally known as the Haggard Hall of Science, was named in his honor in 1960; and

WHEREAS, the Legacy Review Task Force report expressed concerns about Haggard appearing in Native American attire with two students for a school newspaper photograph in 1953; and

WHEREAS, there is no context explaining how or why Haggard came to be in the picture, and no evidence that he held discriminatory views about Native Americans, or that he used his office and authority to enact such views; and

WHEREAS, the Legacy Review Task Force report expressed concerns about a lack of evidence that Haggard publicly spoke out against the internment of Western's sole Japanese American student by Executive Order 9066 in 1942; and

WHEREAS, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II was a gross injustice and an enduring stain on the national conscience, denounced at the time by only a handful of elected officials; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees recognizes the complexities of evaluating an individual's legacy, and that there are a great many contextualizing factors and nuances involved in the interpretation and assessment of an individual's statements and behavior in their time and place; and

WHEREAS, William Wade Haggard, in addition to being Western's longest-serving president, was among its most effective and influential, his contributions to the mission and development of the institution far outweighing his engagement in actions which may be considered insensitive in light of today's values and social norms; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees recognizes that while the names of campus features have powerful symbolic value, these considerations are separate from the need for continued, mission-critical focus on advancing concrete, measurable efforts to increase inclusive success for underrepresented students, faculty, and staff;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, that Haggard Hall shall continue to be named for William Wade Haggard.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University at its meeting on December 9, 2021.

MOTION 12-07-2021

Trustee Lee moved that the Board of Trustees approve Resolution 2021-07 Maintaining the name of Haggard Hall.

The motion passed.

Trustee Meyer explained that the third recommendation of the Legacy Review Task Force was to remove the name of past President Edward T. Mathes from Mathes Hall. Meyer noted that five members of the Task Force voted to recommend removing the names and two members voted to recommend retaining the name.

Meyer reported that additional materials were requested from Western's Heritage Resources, and a letter was submitted by Task Force chair Paul Dunn, expressing disagreement with the report's conclusions on Mathes. He noted that the Board of Trustees Ad Hoc committee prepared another findings of facts document, and a recommendation that Mathes name be maintained on Mathes Hall.

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-08

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

MAINTAINING THE NAME OF MATHES HALL

WHEREAS, Western Washington University is committed to providing access to transformational higher education for the people of the State of Washington, pursuing justice and equity in its policies and practices, and supporting an inclusive and welcoming campus environment that celebrates the dignity and value of all students, faculty, and staff; and

WHEREAS, at the start of in the Winter Quarter of 2021, President Sabah Randhawa charged a Legacy Review Task Force composed of faculty, staff, students, and alumni to review the history and significance of building and college names at Western Washington University, and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees as to whether any names warrant consideration for removal; and

WHEREAS, the Legacy Review Task Force submitted its report and recommendations in June of 2021, and has the gratitude and appreciation of the Board of Trustees for its efforts on behalf of the institution; and

WHEREAS, Edward Tilden Mathes (1866-1937) served as the first principal of the New Whatcom State Normal School, the forerunner of Western Washington University, from its opening in 1899 until 1914; and

WHEREAS, the New Whatcom Normal School was chartered by the State Legislature in 1893, but did not open until 1899 due to lack of funds; and

WHEREAS, Mathes was instrumental in persuading the Legislature to allocate funding for the construction and serial expansion of Old Main and its annexes, a dormitory, an auditorium, and other facilities; and

WHEREAS, during Mathes' 15-year tenure there was a fourfold increase in faculty and a threefold increase in students, partially due to his personal recruitment efforts, as well as the creation of the Campus School, a beacon of progressive education designed to give future teachers hands-on classroom experience; and

WHEREAS, Mathes established the Normal School's Extension Department in 1910 to help educate students' parents and other adults in the community, many of whom had only an elementary education; and

WHEREAS, Mathes helped organize the Bellingham Bay Lecture Course, bringing a notable array of national speakers to a community which had little access at the time, including Progressive Party leader Robert LaFollette, photographer and social reformer Jacob Riis, and more controversial speakers such as South Carolina Senator Benjamin Tillman, among others; and

WHEREAS, in support of Western's first Black student, Alma Clark, and in the face of considerable anti-Black sentiment in the Bellingham community, Mathes and the Board of Trustees passed a resolution supporting her right to receive an education at the Normal School, earning Mathes and the Board commendation from the *Seattle Republican*, Seattle's first successful Black-owned newspaper; and

WHEREAS, the Mathes Hall dormitory was named in his honor in 1966; and

WHEREAS, the Legacy Review Task Force report expressed concerns about newspaper summaries of two among the hundreds of public talks that Mathes gave throughout his life, as they appear to advance a hierarchical conception of human races and cultures, and a view that white people are obliged to educate and "civilize" non-whites; and

WHEREAS, there are no transcripts of Mathes' lectures to determine his specific comments or any record that his views were considered controversial at the time, nor is there any other evidence that Mathes generally held discriminatory views about people of color, or used his office and authority to enact such views; and

WHEREAS, the Legacy Review Task Force report expressed concerns that there is a lack of evidence Mathes made public comments denouncing the violent expulsion of South Asian immigrant laborers from Bellingham in 1907; and

WHEREAS, during Mathes' administration two students from India studied at the Normal School, including one, Nahbi Ram Joshi, who lived in the Mathes family home and enthusiastically supported the naming of a campus building for Mathes; and

WHEREAS, Mathes' support of educational access for Indian students was sufficiently well known that the Vancouver, Canada newspaper *Free Hindustan* called Mathes "a good friend of India"; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees recognizes the complexities of evaluating an individual's legacy, and that there are a great many contextualizing factors and nuances involved in the interpretation and assessment of an individual's statements and behavior in their time and place; and

WHEREAS, Edward Tilden Mathes, in addition to making significant contributions to the mission and development of Western as its first administrative leader, personally and publicly supported Western's few students of color during a time when racism was generally condoned in Bellingham; and

WHEREAS, these contributions and personal commitments outweigh his possible engagement in racist actions or statements which may be considered insensitive in light of today's values and social norms; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees recognizes that while the names of campus features have powerful symbolic value, these considerations are separate from the need for continued, mission-critical focus on advancing concrete, measurable efforts to increase inclusive success for underrepresented students, faculty, and staff;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, that Mathes Hall shall continue to be named for Edward Tilden Mathes.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University at its meeting on December 9, 2021.

MOTION 12-08-2021

Trustee West moved that the Board of Trustees approve Resolution 2021-08 Maintaining the name of Mathes Hall.

The motion passed.