

# Western Washington University Board of Trustees Materials Guidelines

These guidelines have been created to help facilitate effective meeting materials for Western's volunteer Board of Trustees and increase meeting time efficiency. Please work under the assumption that all Trustees and meeting attendees have read the materials provided, and are ready to discuss or act on any issue on the current agenda.

## **General Guidelines** *(unless prior approval is obtained from the President)*

- All Board materials (*i.e. reports, PowerPoints, other presentations, or any handouts*) are due in final form to the President's Office 10 days before the first day of the meeting in order to meet the deadlines listed in the Board's Rules of Operations.
- Last minute materials or handouts are not allowed at the meeting. Trustees like to prepare beforehand and information handed out at the meeting does not give them sufficient time to prepare.
- No more than 2, 8x11 size pages, Arial font size 11, worth of information are allowed for each agenda item.
- Hyperlinks to further information may be included in materials. Please cite the full [website \(http://www.wvu.edu\)](http://www.wvu.edu).
- Understandably for we live and breathe these things. Presentations, if one errs in the level of detail, always err on the side of not taking everyone down into the weeds. Doing so can invite divergence of Board attention from what are Board-level responsibilities. So, please stay at the Board level.
- That having been said, stories, anecdotes, and personal testimonials are much more effective than a passel of carefully researched graphs, charts, and statistics. A blend, but emphasizing the former, can work.

Please find example material templates [here](https://trustees.wvu.edu/) (https://trustees.wvu.edu/).

## **Action Items**

*Purpose: Matters of action for the Board of Trustees.* Please prepare your action item materials so that all the background is given in the written materials. Your presentation on Board day should be a quick review of the issue at hand leaving time for Trustee questions.

## **Discussion Items**

*Purpose: Introduction or discussion of items with the Board of Trustees.* Please prepare your discussion item materials so that the background or preliminary information is in the written materials. We ask that you have prepared 2 to 3 strategic questions that you would like discussed with the Trustees as a way to use their expertise and feedback. Those need not be an explicit part of the materials sent to the Board. Your presentation time on Board day *needs to be split approximately into 1/3 presentation and 2/3 discussion*. The only way to really know if your presentation fits within the 1/3 of time available slot is to practice and time it. Expect that the Board may interrupt with questions and discussion. Don't worry if that happens: a "blended"

presentation/discussion/presentation/more discussion approach is actually better than a strict present-then-discuss approach.

### **Information Items**

*Purpose: Information only for the Board of Trustees and will not be discussed unless there are specific questions.* Routine reports need to be no longer than 2 double sided pages. Required one time annual reports are permitted more pages but try to keep them as brief as possible.

### **Use of PowerPoint and Other Visual Presentations**

PowerPoint (PPT) is an often abused presentation aid. Below are some best practices to help keep your presentation as effective as possible. And, consider presentation alternatives that can more effectively maintain attention; Prezi is just one of many.

If you have a PPT or other visual presentation and would like to see how it reads in the Boardroom, contact the President's office and we will schedule a test run in the room for you. Currently the Boardroom is equipped with a Windows 10 PC, Apple TV compatible, and two screens and projectors. If you have additional questions regarding equipment, please let us know.

Please use the approved Western PPT Templates found on the [Western Brand Central website](http://www.wvu.edu/brand/) (<http://www.wvu.edu/brand/>).

- One slide per minute of presentation time is a general rule.
- No more than 3 colors on a slide. Avoid using red or orange except to bring attention to an item (*red circle around a word*). Blue and black are the easiest colors to read.
- All text should be readable to the person in the back row. If the audience is unable to read the content then the content should be either simplified or removed.
- Slides should NOT have all the information included, the speaker should give additional information. Use a PPT more as a visual presentation, not an information download. The less clutter and more blank space the better.
- If you have to apologize for a slide that is hard to read from a distance or that is too busy, throw it out.
- Organizational charts, data charts, tables or graphs, should contain limited data so the message is clear. Use a circle or arrow to draw attention to a specific header or section. Make sure that the person in the back row can read the chart on the slide.