

**WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2024**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Faith Pettis called the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University to order at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 12, 2024, in the Board of Trustees Conference room, Old Main 340, at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington.

ATTENDANCE

Faith Pettis, Chair
Chris Witherspoon, Vice Chair
Ash Awad, Trustee (on Zoom)
Tina Ekhteraee-Sanaee, Trustee
Maria Siguenza, Trustee
Mo West, Trustee
John Meyer, Trustee
Chase Franklin, Trustee
Sabah Randhawa, President
Becca Kenna-Schenk, President's Office Chief of Staff
Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President
Joyce Lopes, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs
Melynda Huskey, Vice President for Student Affairs
Jacqueline Hughes, Chief Diversity Officer and Executive Director for the Office of Equity
Kerena Higgins, AAG
Michael Slouber, Faculty Senate President
Elissa Hicks, Policy Coordinator for Government Relations and the Board of Trustees
Rebecca Hansen-Zeller, Executive and Liaison to the Board of Trustees

2. CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGIC VISION PLAN

Presenters began by sharing their process and the data that was collected to prepare the report. They told the Board about constituent outreach efforts and the input they received from those engagements. They presented data on the functional space needs and how existing and new facilities could enhance the campus experience, build identity, and promote environmental stewardship. The project team made enrollment projections and assessed the physical and functional conditions of existing buildings in their analysis to determine future needs.

Chair Pettis asked how residential needs factor into this study. The project team reported that a similar study is being done for housing and will include Fairhaven.

Trustee Awad asked if the efficiency of the current use of buildings was considered. Presenters indicated that with the existing capacity, there is currently surplus space, but that existing space needs to be reallocated to meet emerging needs. For example, as WWU's graduate programs grow, more space for research labs is needed.

Trustee Franklin asked how the estimated square footage needs are calculated for future uses. The presenters explained how those ratios are determined and adjusted for expected future needs. Provost Johnson elaborated on ways that Instruction is using this data to help with planning.

Trustee Ekhteraee-Sanaee inquired about the enrollment projections and whether the expected enrollment cliff was factored into the estimates. President Randhawa acknowledged that the enrollment cliff is a nationwide reality but that Western is positioning itself to maintain its strengths to drive growth.

After finishing the conversation about the process, presenters then transitioned to sharing the strategic development concept. Given the geography of where the campus is situated, they suggested continued development of a central Main Street going east to west across campus. They also recommended enhancing gateways and entrances to campus. Infill was the main strategy, rather than expanding the campus or building upward. Future parking facilities were also considered in the analysis. Building conditions were evaluated and recommended for renovation or replacement. Sites were also evaluated for potential infill opportunities for new construction.

Trustee Awad shared thoughts about how design can be used to incentivize having fewer fossil-fuel-burning vehicles on campus.

The presenters added that individual buildings were evaluated and prioritized according to need. Presenters shared design possibilities and showed renderings for some of the near-term projects. Maintaining open space and fostering a sense of belonging and sense of place were important criteria when considering recommendations for campus improvements.

Trustee West asked how disability access can be improved and presenters noted some of the challenges of our campus layout and improvements that upcoming projects can incorporate into their design. Trustee West also asked how mental health needs were considered in planning. Presenters shared how the physical plan creates an environment that supports wellness.

Chair Faith Pettis thanked the presenters and commented on the big aspirations of the plan and how budget realities will impact the timeline for realizing the vision.

3. STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESS CENTER PROJECT UPDATE

The purpose of the new building is to make student services, advising and counseling services more visible and accessible to students. This building will serve as both a front porch and living room for the campus and will activate that area of campus. The team covered the scope, schedule and budget for the project. They shared concepts for the siting of the building, the interior layout, and where various functions will be located in the building. Building occupancy is expected in June 2027.

Chair Pettis asked if the group coordinated with the Campus Development and Strategic Vision Plan team, and they did.

Trustee Meyer inquired about the study café and asked if the intended use of the space meets future needs. The project team answered that the space meets a variety of needs, including individual study and collaborative space, and also offers food service. Trustee Meyer also asked about student input into the project.

Trustee West asked how equity, inclusion and belonging will be promoted in the space. The team shared that access, inclusion and well-being were included in the thought process and there will be an intentional effort to promote services available at The Centers and other services on campus.

Trustee Awad asked about the budget and why adjustments were made from the original funding request. The team shared that the budget was reduced by about 15% and the final building will be 26,000 gross square feet. Trustee Awad asked if the project budget aligns with comparable buildings on other college campuses and asked for additional information on how the project budget was established.

Trustee Franklin asked about the ways the project footprint changed when the third floor was eliminated.

4. COAST SALISH LONGHOUSE – HOUSE OF HEALING UPDATE

Laural Ballew spoke about the importance of the longhouse and the outreach to and input from Tribal partners. The Native American Student Union (NASU) has been closely involved in the planning. The building will have many uses and will be a place for Native students to gather and feel a sense of belonging. She shared the history of the project which began with a request from NASU in 2019 and she outlined the process for requesting funding and the construction that followed. Occupancy is expected in October 2025 and there will be a grand event and a special ceremony.

Presenters explained the design-build process, and spoke about the partnership with the city. They shared the floorplan for the building and highlighted some of the unique features.

Trustee West asked if Native students gave input on the space and how they plan to use it. Laural Ballew shared the ways our NASU students were included in the design. They will use the building for meetings and cultural activities and it is also a place for them to access services.

Faith Pettis inquired about access to the building and how it will connect to the campus.

Trustee Siguenza asked if the community will have access to the space, and they will. The space is intended for community building.

Trustee Ekhteraee-Sanaee asked how the university will work with K-12 students and share opportunities for Native students at Western.

Trustee West shared her hope that this will help with recruitment and retention of Native students.

Trustee Siguenza asked if the university has continued communication with the students who made the initial request in 2019. Laural Ballew shared that some of those former students have been part of the planning committee.

5. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 3:29pm.

**WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2024**

6. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Faith Pettis called the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University to order at 8:00 a.m. on Friday, December 13, 2024, in the Board of Trustees Conference room, Old Main 340, at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington.

ATTENDANCE

Faith Pettis, Chair
Chris Witherspoon, Vice Chair
Ash Awad, Trustee (on Zoom)
Tina Ekhteraee-Sanaee, Trustee
Maria Siguenza, Trustee
Mo West, Trustee
John Meyer, Trustee
Chase Franklin, Trustee
Sabah Randhawa, President
Becca Kenna-Schenk, President's Office Chief of Staff
Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President
Joyce Lopes, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs
Melynda Huskey, Vice President for Student Affairs
Jacqueline Hughes, Chief Diversity Officer and Executive Director for the Office of Equity
Jim Sterk, Athletics Director
Kerena Higgins, AAG
Michael Slouber, Faculty Senate President
Malachi Phillips, ASWWU President
Elissa Hicks, Policy Coordinator for Government Relations and the Board of Trustees
Rebecca Hansen-Zeller, Executive and Liaison to the Board of Trustees

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Regular Meeting: October 17-18, 2024

MOTION 12-01-2024: Trustee John Meyer MOVED, that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, upon the recommendation of the president, approve the following minutes:

- a. Board of Trustees Regular Meeting on October 17-18, 2024.

Trustee Mo West seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

Nobody signed up for public comment.

9. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Chair Pettis shared about the positive experiences at both the Kaiser-Borsari ribbon-cutting and the dinner gathering with the Foundation Board. She reported that the Board and President completed their annual evaluation for the Executive and Liaison to the Board of Trustees. Chair Pettis shared that she, Trustee Awad and Nora Selander, Director of Government Relations, had a positive meeting with Representative Jamie Pederson where they were able to present Western's legislative asks for the upcoming session. Chair Pettis noted that Regents and Trustees Day in Olympia is on January 30.

Chair Pettis asked Trustee Franklin, who is chairing the Advisory Council for Socially Responsible Investing (ACSRI), to summarize the first meeting of the advisory committee. Trustee Franklin reported on the progress toward drafting the SRI policy which will eventually be brought to the Board for its consideration. The ACSRI meets next on January 13, 2025.

10. UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT REPORT

President Randhawa started by sharing thoughts on budget cuts to align the operating budget with university revenue, and the difficult process and decisions that are ahead. He acknowledged that a successful university is not entirely run by budget numbers and that Western remains committed to access and excellence.

President Randhawa shared the purpose of moving enrollment management to Outreach and Continuing Education and how it will strengthen our partnerships with community colleges. He also reported on his visit to the Methow Valley and the positive connections that were made. Western's Sustainability Pathways Program and some College in the High School offerings are currently located in the Methow Valley. President Randhawa also attended a session on the state of education that was hosted by the City of Bellingham. That meeting included K-12, community college, and university partners. He also recently met with the Suquamish Tribal Council to discuss Western's expansion on the Peninsulas and how we can further establish a partnership with the Tribe. The final item that he noted was that the Gates Foundation is convening a meeting among regional K-12, community college and workforce leaders and the inaugural meeting will be hosted on campus.

11. FACULTY SENATE REPORT

Michael Slouber, Faculty Senate President, began by sharing the work being done on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the information that has been gathered about the concerns and questions among Faculty. He also reported on the series of workshops that teach skills for having difficult conversations. The Senate will continue to work on hosting speakers and conversations related to free expression on campus. Michael Slouber shared information and debate regarding a change in how students are represented on some Faculty Senate committees.

Trustee Awad asked if there is a general acceptance that AI will be pervasive in higher education, and more broadly, in the near future. President Slouber reported that there are mixed levels of acceptance and different types of classroom adjustments being made among Faculty.

Michael Slouber concluded by sharing thoughts about budget cuts. He asked for increased participation in the process. He asked for additional transparency and, in the spirit of shared governance, more representation of Faculty in decision-making. He offered ideas for reductions that could be considered in lieu of Faculty layoffs.

12. ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY REPORT

Malachi Phillips, Associated Students of Western Washington University President, began by sharing his positive thoughts about the Kaiser-Borsari Hall grand-opening. He then highlighted a few items from his report including ASWWU's collaboration with other student groups to strengthen legislative advocacy, and the ways ASWWU is looking at ways student government can empower students and make their voices heard. He commented on proposed changes to the removal of student voting positions on Faculty Senate committees and asked for more participation in shared governance. ASWWU is looking at internal structural changes in their dual-legislative system to help give students more voice. He talked about balancing S&A fees with concerns about students who are financing their education and also experiencing housing or food insecurity. He announced that the vacant positions on the Executive Committee have all been filled. President Phillips concluded by sharing concerns about how on and off-campus student deaths are reported and communicated.

The Trustees thanked President Phillips for the thoroughness of the report.

13. BOARD FINANCE, AUDIT, AND ENTERPRISE RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Trustee Chase Franklin, Chair of the Finance, Audit, and Enterprise Risk Management Committee, reported on the last two committee meetings. The committee met in November for a discussion about IT Security. They received information on security threats and our strong record of maintaining system security. User education and multi-factor identification

were credited with our low rate of system breaches. The committee also received data on the gap between tuition projections and actuals, and they reviewed the status of the Board approved property sales. Their meeting in December focused on the operating budget and they heard an update on administrative restructuring. The Athletics budget is among the next topics that the committee will explore.

14. BOARD ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND STUDENT SUCCESS COMMITTEE REPORT

Trustee Mo West, Chair, Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee, shared that the committee was unable to meet in November but meets immediately after the Board meeting. The committee invited the directors of Western's Centers and Institutes to share the scope and impact of their work. The committee will also hear a report on mental health outreach to students in need of services. She underscored the committee's interest in intentional outreach to students of color and historically underserved groups through initiatives like our pilot program at Mt. Vernon and Ferndale High Schools. She shared that she is optimistic about ways the newly available state database of high school senior contact information will be used to increase our targeted recruitment efforts.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

15. FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH

Provost and Executive Vice President Brad Johnson began by emphasizing that one of Western's core strengths is its innovative approach to high-impact research experiences for undergraduate and graduate students. He introduced four faculty members whose work adds to Western's strength in research and scholarship, student mentoring, and external funding to support research.

Dr. Jeanine Amacher, Associate Professor of Chemistry, College of Science and Engineering, began the presentations. Her lab uses protein biochemistry and structural biology to investigate specificity in protein-protein interactions that involve recognition of a small number of amino acids, or peptides.

Dr. Marco Hatch, Associate Professor of Environmental Science, College of the Environment, shared his research that is focused on weaving traditional ecological knowledge and marine science through the exploration of food systems.

Dr. Mariana Smit Vega Garcia, Professor of Mathematics, College of Science and Engineering, continued by sharing her work in the areas of mathematical analysis, studying equations that describe natural phenomena, and combinatorics.

Dr. Christine Johnston, Associate Professor of History, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, gave the final presentation. Her research focuses on the economic and environmental history in the Mediterranean, West Asia, and North Africa during the Bronze Age.

Trustees were impressed by the breadth of research being done and the impact the experiences and mentorship have on students.

ACTION ITEMS

16. APPROVAL OF FALL QUARTER DEGREES

MOTION 12-02-2024: Trustee Tina Ekhteraee-Sanaee MOVED, that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, on recommendation of the faculty and subject to the completion of any unmet requirements, approves awarding undergraduate and graduate degrees to the candidates listed in the files of the Registrar and Graduate Dean, for Fall Quarter 2024, effective December 14, 2024.

Trustee Chase Franklin seconded. The motion passed 8-0.

17. WRITTEN REPORTS

- a. Enrollment Management Summary
- b. University Advancement Report
- c. Capital Program Report
- d. Student Affairs Report
- e. Services and Activities Fee Update
- f. Accessibility, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Report
- g. Government Relations Report

Chair Pettis noted that the Advancement report now includes Marketing and Communications. She thanked Vice President Huskey for the S&A fee report. The ADEI report is submitted twice per year and she thanked Jacqueline Hughes for the updates. Chair Pettis noted that the Government Relations reports will continue through the end of the legislative session.

Trustee Siguenza inquired about ways the university tracks students through their time at Western. Shelli Soto shared how retention is measured and ways we are able to organize that data and follow specific cohorts and groups of students. Provost and Executive Vice President Johnson noted a report that will be forthcoming related to the enrollment and persistence of Compass to Campus participants. Trustee Siguenza noted that she was pleased to see sustainability improvements to the SMATE building and asked about Electric Vehicle goals for the university fleet.

Trustee Witherspoon asked Jacqueline Hughes how Faculty Senate will partner with her and give input on the content for future courses and dialogues to build on the trainings that were offered in the Fall.

18. TRUSTEE REMARKS

Trustee Meyer reflected on the presentations that highlighted Faculty research. The complexity of the work was impressive, and he noted the unique academic experience that

Western offers. Vice Chair Witherspoon echoed being impressed by the excellence of our faculty.

19. DATES FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING

The next Regular Meeting is February 13-14, 2025 in Bellingham, WA.

20. EXECUTIVE SESSION AS AUTHORIZED BY RCW42.30.110(1)(i)

Chair Faith Pettis announced a 15-minute Executive Session at 10:23am. The Executive Session ended at 10:47am.

21. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 10:48am.