

# **WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

## **Friday, August 15, 2025**

Location: Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA, Board Room, Old Main 340  
Time: 8:00 a.m.

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Faith Pettis called the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University to order at 8:00am on Friday, August 15, 2025, in the Board of Trustees Conference room, Old Main 340, at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington.

#### **Attendance:**

Sabah Randhawa, President  
Faith Pettis, Chair  
Chris Witherspoon, Vice Chair  
Chase Franklin, Trustee  
John Meyer, Trustee  
Mo West, Trustee  
Ash Awad, Trustee  
Maria Siguenza, Trustee (On Zoom)  
Ashlynn Tibbot, Trustee  
Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President  
Joyce Lopes, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs  
Kim Hill, Vice President for Advancement, Executive Director for the Foundation for Western Washington University and Alumni  
Jacqueline Hughes, Chief Diversity Officer and Executive Director for the Office of Equity  
Becca Kenna-Schenk, President's Office Chief of Staff  
Kerena Higgins, Assistant Attorney General  
Erika McPhee-Shaw, Faculty Senate President  
Rebecca Hansen-Zeller, Executive and Liaison to the Board of Trustees  
Elissa Hicks, Government Relations and Board of Trustees Policy Coordinator

### **2. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 8:01am, Chair Pettis called an Executive Session for 20 minutes to review the performance of a public employee. The session was authorized by RCW 41.30.120(1)(g).

The Executive Session ended at 8:20am.

### **3. BREAK**

### **4. RECONVENE**

Chair Pettis welcomed everyone back to the open public session at 8:28am.

### **5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. Regular Meeting: June 13, 2025

Chair Pettis asked the Trustees if they have any changes or questions about the minutes.

Vice Chair Chris Witherspoon made a motion to approve the minutes.

**MOTION 8-1-2025**      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, June 13, 2025

Trustee Mo West seconded the motion.

Trustee Tibbot was not present for the June 13, 2025 meeting and abstained from voting.

The motion passed 7-0 and the minutes were approved.

### **6. PUBLIC COMMENT**

The Board of Trustees agenda provides for public comment per Amended RCW 28B.35.110, also known as the Open Public Meetings Act. Opportunities to sign up for public comment begin when the Board agenda is posted one week in advance of the meeting and continue up to the start of the meeting today.

Nobody signed up for public comment.

### **7. BOARD CHAIR REPORT**

The Chair's report began with two special recognition Resolutions, one to welcome the new Student Trustee, Ashlynn Tibbot, and another to thank Trustee Chase Franklin for his service. He is approaching the end of his second term and will be leaving the Board when his successor is appointed.

#### **a. RESOLUTION 2025-03: WELCOMING TRUSTEE ASHLYNN TIBBOT**

Trustee Ashlynn Tibbot introduced herself and shared that she is looking forward to serving on the Board.

Trustee Mo West read the Resolution.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2025-03**  
**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF**  
**WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**  
**WELCOMING TRUSTEE**  
*Ashlynn Tibbot*

**WHEREAS**, beginning on July 25, 2025, Governor Bob Ferguson appointed Ashlynn Tibbot of Milton, WA to serve a term ending on June 30, 2026, on the Western Washington University Board of Trustees; and

**WHEREAS**, Ashlynn Tibbot is a student in good standing at Western Washington University pursuing a bachelor's degree with a double major in Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies, and English with a Creative Writing and Teaching Endorsement; and

**WHEREAS**, Ashlynn Tibbot has a record of involvement in campus and community activities including working as a Lead Student Ambassador and serving as a club officer for WWU's Writers Block – Creative Writing Club. She was also a featured speaker at the 2025 Planned Parenthood: Bans Off Our Bodies Event; and

**WHEREAS**, Ashlynn Tibbot excelled throughout the Student Trustee application and Associated Students of Western Washington University committee review process; and

**WHEREAS**, Ashlynn Tibbot has declared her commitment to serve as a member of the Western Washington University Board of Trustees; and

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University officially extends a warm welcome to Ashlynn Tibbot as she begins her term on the Board.

**MOTION 8-2-2025** Trustee Mo West **MOVED**, that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University officially welcome new Trustee Ashlynn Tibbot by approving Resolution 2025-03.

Trustee Ash Awad seconded the motion. Trustee Ashlynn Tibbot abstained from voting on this item.

The motion passed 7-0.

**b. RESOLUTION 2025-04: RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF TRUSTEE CHASE FRANKLIN**

Trustee John Meyer began by commenting on Trustee Franklin's intelligence, the way he embodies the role of a Trustee, and the way he raised thoughtful questions that led the Board to informed decisions. He also thanked Trustee Franklin for his friendship.

Trustee Witherspoon thanked Trustee Franklin for being an outstanding alum and the many ways he gives back to the university.

Chair Pettis commented that Trustee Franklin approaches issues from a unique angle. She thanked him for agreeing to accept many leadership positions on the Board and for taking on difficult work such as chairing both the Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee and the Advisory Committee for Socially Responsible Investing.

Trustee Mo West thanked Trustee Franklin for being a model Trustee and for keeping student success as the driver for the Board's work.

Trustee Ash Awad shared his appreciation for Trustee Franklin's mentorship and his smart inquiry into strategic issues.

Trustee Siguenza commented on Trustee Franklin's fun personality and the ways he models the role of a Trustee.

President Randhawa thanked Trustee Franklin for his strategic thinking and sense of humor. He shared that Trustee Franklin respectfully challenged the President's team to think about issues through new lenses and help them to strengthen the university. He also shared appreciation to Trustee Franklin, and his wife Teri Franklin, for their philanthropic support through the Foundation for Western Washington University and Alumni.

Trustee John Meyer then read the Resolution.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2025-04  
A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF  
WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY  
RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF TRUSTEE  
*Chase Franklin***

**WHEREAS**, Chase Franklin of Seattle, WA was appointed to the Western Washington University Board of Trustees by Governor Inslee on June 2, 2014; and was reappointed to a second term in 2019; and

**WHEREAS**, Chase Franklin was instrumental in strategic planning for the future of the university. He consistently considered issues within the context of the mission, vision, values, and goals of the institution and effectively fulfilled his role as a fiduciary; and

**WHEREAS**, Chase Franklin thinks creatively, raises germane issues, and challenges assumptions in thoughtful ways. He often posed important questions in committee and full Board meetings that helped shape the University's approach to student achievement, infrastructure planning and risk management; and

**WHEREAS**, Chase Franklin demonstrated his leadership by serving as Vice Chair of the Board from 2016-2022. During his tenure on the Board, he served on every committee that existed during his term, including the Executive Committee, Governance Committee, Trustees Committee, Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee and the Finance, Audit and Enterprise Risk Management Committee. He served as Chair of the Finance, Audit and Enterprise Risk Management Committee in 2024-2025; and

**WHEREAS**, Chase Franklin chaired the first-ever Advisory Committee on Socially Responsible Investing and led that group to develop a policy on Socially Responsible Investing that was adopted by the Board; and

**WHEREAS**, Chase Franklin was a respectful colleague who added both his expertise and vibrant personality to the professional and personal relationships he built on the Board; and

**WHEREAS**, Chase Franklin, and his wife, Teri, are committed to teaching and learning at Western, and through the Foundation for Western Washington University and Alumni, endowed the WWU College of Business and Economics' Allette and Cayden Franklin Excellence in Teaching Award; and

**WHEREAS**, Chase Franklin is a proud Western Washington University alum, long-time Trustee, and forever friend to Western Washington University; and

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University that Chase Franklin is hereby honored for outstanding service and dedication to the University and is extended the gratitude and best wishes of the entire University community.

**MOTION 8-3-2025** Trustee John Meyer **MOVED**, that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University recognize Trustee Chase Franklin's service on the Board by approving Resolution 2025-04.

Trustee Mo West seconded the motion. Trustee Chase Franklin abstained from voting.

The motion passed 7-0.

Trustee Franklin thanked his colleagues for their kind words. He reflected that serving for twelve years is a long period of time in one's personal life, but only a short time within the life of the university. The work of the Board is incremental, but each action has impact and is taken with the goal of putting the university in a strong position long into the future. He commented that his time on this board has been fulfilling and thanked his Board colleagues.

After the special recognitions, Chair Pettis reported on things that have happened since the Board's last meeting in June. She noted that all eight Board Members proudly participated in the June Commencement ceremonies. She then thanked Trustees West and Tibbot for attending the President's Summer BBQ events for donors and friends of Western. Chair Pettis shared that she met with a Faculty Member who leads a sustainability program in the Methow Valley and was impressed with the work being done there. She noted that she and Vice Chair Witherspoon met with Faculty Senate President Erika McPhee-Shaw over the summer and are looking forward to working together this year.

## **8. UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT REPORT**

President Randhawa began his report by acknowledging the impact of budget reductions. He reflected that it has been a difficult year for the institution, and for employees. The current situation calls for both empathy and a commitment to the long-term financial health of Western. He acknowledged the Board's important role in committing to difficult decision-making while maintaining excellence and focusing on the mission and maintaining excellence.

President Randhawa shared that the state budget is expected to remain flat. He has been meeting with legislators to prepare for the supplemental session and has been communicating the impact of the state budget reductions. With little or no additional state resources expected this year, there is an urgent focus on recruitment and enrollment. He noted that new initiatives to ease access will be employed to meet the ambitious Fall 2026 enrollment goals. As part of that effort, Chief Diversity Officer, Jacqueline Hughes, will coordinate work on belonging and retention.

President Randhawa shared that improving the S&A Fee process and allocation of the fees is something he and his team will work on this year. Chair Pettis thanked President Randhawa for taking on that process because it is the Board's role as a fiduciary to better understand the process and allocations before approving them.

To close the report, President Randhawa invited AAG Kerena Higgins and Dan Records-Galbraith from the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance, to provide an update on Western's response to the Department of Justice letter and about the guidance recently received in a memo from Secretary Bondi. AAG Higgins reported on the steps that have been taken to respond and the plan for providing additional records. Maintaining confidentiality and privacy have been priorities as the records are reviewed and submitted. AAG Higgins shared confidence in the policies that are in place to address discrimination and antisemitism on campus. In response to the memo from Secretary Bondi and our Accessibility, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion work, Western's procedures are under review to ensure that all practices align with state and federal laws. Trustees asked a series of questions to better understand the process for responding.

## **9. FACULTY SENATE REPORT**

Chair Pettis welcomed Erika McPhee-Shaw, who has assumed her role as President of the Faculty Senate and will represent that group at Board meetings this year. She also recognized James Ray, the Vice President of the Faculty Senate. Both introduced their personal and professional backgrounds.

President McPhee-Shaw's report began by sharing that the focus for the Faculty Senate this year is participation in shared governance of the university. Building trust and relationships with the Board of Trustees and administration is another priority.

She reported that the revised Faculty Handbook was recently approved and signed. She shared information about the work of the AAUP Task Force. There are new members on the Executive Council, and she shared the structure and purpose of that group. Some of the challenging issues that the Senate will discuss at its first meeting this Fall include budget reductions, federal actions and Artificial Intelligence.

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

Trustee Chase Franklin reported that the FARM Committee had met twice since June. The committee reviewed Internal Audit reports, held an exit conference with the State Auditor's Office, and had an entrance conference with CliftonLarsonAllen. The Risk Registry Report was presented with a focus on the six priority risks that have each been assigned to a member of the executive team for regular reporting on risk mitigation.

The second FARM Committee meeting was a short ad-hoc meeting to discuss an Internal Audit investigation report.

Trustee and FARM Committee member, Ash Awad, expressed confidence in Vice President Joyce Lopes' team and thanked her for the professionalism, the preparation and transparency of the collaborative work with our auditors

## **11. BOARD ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND STUDENT SUCCESS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Trustee Mo West reported that at the last committee meeting, members were given an overview of the data dashboard, which will be reviewed regularly throughout the year. The committee also received a report on the status of Fall enrollment and the ongoing recruitment efforts that are underway to address the projected shortfall, which the committee noted will have operating budget impacts. Committee members expressed support for exploring direct admissions, specific targeted outreach, and smoothing transfer pipelines. Provost Johnson shared that the common application for Fall 2026 had recently opened, and recruitment efforts were already underway for next year. Provost Johnson also briefed the committee on structural changes within Academic Affairs. The committee discussed how to respond to concerns about budget reductions and structural shifts. Committee Chair West concluded her report with comments on the revised Charter that is under review by the committee members.

Before moving to the Action Items, Chair Pettis welcomed Aspen Cates-Doglio to the meeting, who is the new President of the Associated Students of Western Washington University. President Cates-Doglio introduced himself as a fourth-year student who previously served as the Associated Students Vice President of Government Affairs. He shared a bit about his community involvement and expressed his enthusiasm for being in a new leadership role. His goals for ASWWU this year are to increase participation in student government, gain student trust, and build good relationships with the administration, Board of Trustees and Faculty Senate.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **12. APPROVAL OF PRESIDENT’S CONTRACT REVISION**

The President’s contract was discussed during Executive Session. The current contract expires in 2026 and will be discussed in detail during the coming year. At this meeting, the Board considered an amendment to compensation to include a cost-of-living adjustment consistent with what other administrators were given.

Vice Chair Chris Witherspoon made the motion to amend the President’s Contract to include a Cost of Living Adjustment.

**MOTION 8-4-2025**      **MOVED** that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, upon recommendation of the Board Chair, approve a 2.5% cost of living increase in the President’s salary, retroactively effective July 1, 2025.

Trustee Franklin seconded the motion. Trustee Tibbot abstained from voting on this item.

The motion passed 7-0.

### **13. APPROVAL OF 2026 SUPPLEMENTAL CAPITAL BUDGET REQUEST**

Joyce Lopes, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs; and Traci Brewer-Rogstad, Associate Vice President for Facilities, Development and Operations briefly summarized the budget request. Main components of the proposed request are minor works preservation, funding for design of the new building in Poulsbo, and preventive maintenance.

Trustee Ash Awad made the motion to approve the 2026 Supplemental Capital Budget Request.

**MOTION 8-5-2025**      **MOVED**, that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, upon recommendation of the President, approve the 2026 Supplemental Capital Budget Request totaling \$11,805,000 for: Minor Works – Preservation (\$4,000,000), Poulsbo Instructional Facility (\$7,305,000 million), and Preventative Maintenance and Facility Repair (\$500,000).

Trustee John Meyer seconded the motion.

The motion passed 8-0.

#### **14. APPROVAL OF 2026 SUPPLEMENTAL OPERATING BUDGET REQUEST**

Joyce Lopes, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs; and Faye Gallant, Associate Vice President for Strategy, Management and Budget gave a brief overview of the proposed operating budget request. The request asks for an adjustment to the fund split with a return to at least 70/30. Restoring cuts made last session and maintaining the current budget without additional cuts will be central to Western's messaging.

President Randhawa offered other ideas for developing additional requests, such as funding for high-impact programs, in case opportunities arise. Trustee Ash Awad supported that proactive work.

Trustee Chase Franklin made the motion to approve the 2026 Supplemental Operating Budget Request.

##### **MOTION 8-6-2025**

**MOVED**, that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, upon the recommendation of the President, approve the 2026-2027 Supplemental Operating Budget Request of \$3.12 million recurring per year, plus a state-mandated non-cash technical adjustment of \$5.37 million. With concurrence of the Board Chair, the President may make adjustments to the approved budget request in response to subsequent instructions from the Office of Financial Management, to advance consistency among the submissions of Washington's six public baccalaureate institutions, or other adjustments as appropriate.

Trustee Mo West seconded the motion.

The motion passed 8-0.

#### **15. APPROVAL OF BOARD OFFICERS FOR 2025-2026**

The Board annually elects a Chair and Vice Chair. For 2025-2026, the proposal was for Chair Pettis and Vice Chair Witherspoon to continue in their roles.

Trustee John Meyer made the motion to approve the 2025-2026 Board Officers.

##### **MOTION 8-7-2025**

**MOVED**, that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University elect the following Trustees to one-year terms as Board officers, beginning July 1, 2025, end ending June 30, 2026:

- Faith Pettis, Chair
- Chris Witherspoon, Vice Chair

Trustee Ash Awad seconded the motion.

Chair Pettis and Vice Chair Witherspoon abstained from voting.

The motion passed 6-0.

Chair Pettis shared that as Trustee Chase Franklin terms off, Trustee John Meyer has agreed to Chair the Finance, Audit and Enterprise Risk Management committee this year. Thank you to John for stepping into that role. Trustee Mo West will continue to lead the Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee.

## **16. APPROVAL OF SUMMER QUARTER DEGREES**

Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President, proudly shared that 395 undergraduate students and 50 masters students completed their degrees over the summer.

Trustee Ashlynn Tibbot made the motion to approve the Summer Quarter degrees.

**MOTION 8-8-2025**      **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 Summer Quarter 2025, effective August 15, 2025.

Vice Chair Witherspoon seconded the motion.

The motion passed 8-0. Congratulations to the graduates.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **17. WRITTEN REPORTS**

- a. Enrollment Management Summary
- b. University Advancement Report
- c. Capital Program Report
- d. Annual Grant Report

The Trustees reviewed the reports and thanked those who worked on them.

### **18. TRUSTEE REMARKS**

Chair Pettis invited Trustees to make closing remarks.

## **19. DATES FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING**

The next meeting is October 16-17, 2025 in Bellingham, WA.

## **20. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 10:04am, Chair Pettis announced that the Board was having a 10-minute Executive Session to end at 10:14am. The session was authorized by RCW 42.30.110 and the purpose is to discuss matters relating to agency enforcement actions with legal counsel.

At 10:14am, the Executive Session was extended by 10 minutes to end at 10:24am.

At 10:28am, the Executive Session was extended for 5 minutes to end at 10:33am.

At 10:34am, the session was extended for an additional 5 minutes to end at 10:39am.

The Executive Session ended at 10:36am

## **21. ADJOURN**

This meeting was adjourned at 10:37am.

## **22. BREAK**

## **23. RECONVENE FOR BOARD WORK SESSION**

## **24. LAKEWOOD: 2401 Lake Whatcom Boulevard, Bellingham, WA 98229**

The Board reconvened at 11:33am and Chair Pettis called the meeting to order.

At 11:33am, Chair Pettis then called an Executive Session for one hour, to end at 12:33pm. The session was authorized by RCW 41.30.120(1)(g), and the purpose was to review the performance of a public employee. The Executive Session ended at 12:22pm

After the Executive Session, the Board discussed the results of its self-assessment. Cabinet Members then joined the work session and shared reflections on recent institutional changes, budget planning for FY26, and the 2026 legislative strategy.

## **25. ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 2:43pm.