

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 12, 2026

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Faith Pettis called the February 12, 2026, meeting of the Western Washington University Board of Trustees to order at 3:03 p.m. in Old Main 340 at Western Washington University in Bellingham, WA.

She began by commenting that Kaiser Borsari Hall is an impressive facility. Board members attended the ribbon-cutting for the new building in December of 2024 and she was happy that the meeting was being held there.

Attendance

Chair Faith Pettis

Vice Chair Chris Witherspoon (on Zoom)

Trustee Mo West

Trustee Maria Siguenza

Trustee Ash Awad (on Zoom)

Trustee David Frockt

Trustee Ashlynn Tibbot

President Sabah Randhawa

Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President

Joyce Lopes, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs

Kim Hill, Vice President for Advancement, CEO for the Foundation for Western Washington University and Alumni

Jacqueline Hughes, Chief Diversity Officer, Executive Director for the Office of Equity

Becca Kenna-Schenk, Chief of Staff

Rebecca Hansen-Zeller, Executive and Liaison to the Board of Trustees

Elissa Hicks, Policy Coordinator for Government Relations and the Board of Trustees

2. PRESENTATION: APPLIED DOCTORATE PROGRAMS AT WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, AUDIOLOGY AU.D.

Presentation: Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President
Dave Patrick, Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Research

Keith Russell, Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Science

Kimberly Peters, Professor, Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences; Aural Rehabilitation/Resonance Clinic Director

Andrea Reed, Audiology Clinic Director; Professor and Department Chair, Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences

Sterling Sheffield, Associate Professor, Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences.

Victoria Minchuk, AuD Graduate Student

Kacey Wilson, AuD Graduate Student

Chair Faith Pettis welcomed the presenters and invited Provost Brad Johnson and Dean Keith Russell to introduce the topic and the presentation team. The Au.D. Program at Western has a unique education and training model, a sophisticated facility, and is the only Audiology Program in WA State.

In 2012, audiologist requirements changed to require a Doctorate. Western sunset its Masters program and developed a new Doctorate program that began admitting students in 2017. The program model is a four-year clinical doctorate that concludes with a capstone. At the end of the third year, students apply for an external fourth year placement. Upon completion, the program has a 100% employment outcome.

The Clinic serves patients across the region, many of whom are low-income or do not have insurance. It provides hearing and speech/language screenings, provides specialized audiologic appointments, has a Hearing Aid Bank and offers Aural Rehabilitation for children and adults.

Au.D. Program Faculty shared their areas of research, and Au.D. students shared their experiences. The presentation was followed by a tour of the Clinic.

3. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 3:54pm.

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Friday, February 13, 2026

4. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Faith Pettis called the February 13, 2026, meeting of the Western Washington University Board of Trustees to order at 8:02 a.m. in Old Main 340 at Western Washington University in Bellingham, WA.

Attendance

Chair Faith Pettis

Vice Chair Chris Witherspoon (on Zoom)

Trustee Mo West

Trustee Maria Siguenza

Trustee Ash Awad

Trustee Ashlynn Tibbot

President Sabah Randhawa

Erika McPhee-Shaw, Faculty Senate President

Aspen Cates-Doglio, ASWWU President

Kerena Higgins, AAG

Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President

Joyce Lopes, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs

Jacqueline Hughes, Chief Diversity Officer, Executive Director for the Office of Equity

Becca Kenna-Schenk, Chief of Staff

Rebecca Hansen-Zeller, Executive and Liaison to the Board of Trustees

Elissa Hicks, Policy Coordinator for Government Relations and the Board of Trustees

5. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Faith Pettis called the February 13, 2026, meeting of the Western Washington University Board of Trustees to order at 8:02am.

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. There were no speakers signed up for public comment.

7. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Chair Pettis gave a report to update attendees on things that happened since the December 2025 Board meeting and share thoughts on some of the priority issues the Board is tracking.

She began by sharing that the Board heard an excellent presentation on Western's Applied Doctorate programs. They learned about the Audiology Au.D. and took a tour of the Audiology Clinic. The Trustees were impressed by the program, the services offered by the Clinic, and the sophistication of the facility itself. Trustee West commented that the community impact was an important service to the region. Trustee Siguenza noted the passion of the presenters for the program and the patients they serve.

Chair Pettis congratulated Trustee Ashlynn Tibbott, who had her confirmation hearing before the Senate Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee on January 19. Trustee David Frockt's confirmation hearing is scheduled later in the month.

She thanked Aspen Cates-Doglio for their meeting.

The Trustees are watching the legislative session carefully and are preparing to meet with legislators before a final supplemental budget is passed. Later in February, Chair Pettis and President Randhawa plan to testify at a Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee hearing in support of the per student funding bill that Western is advocating for.

The Trustees are also tracking efforts related to the Strategic Enrollment Growth Initiative. Applications and confirmations for Fall 2026 are looking positive, and the Board remains supportive of the intensive effort that is being put into recruitment and outreach to students who are part of the 5-county pilot program. Given the state budget outlook, enrollment growth is a priority for budget stabilization.

Chair Pettis acknowledged a few pride points, including the success of Western Alum and Olympic Skier, Breezy Johnson, who won a gold medal for Team USA. She also recognized Western's Fulbright Program, which is the #1 producer of Fulbright Scholars in our category of Masters-awarding institutions. In closing, she thanked the Foundation for hosting WWU Night at the Kraken game.

8. UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT REPORT

President Sabah Randhawa reported on recent priorities. He began by noting concerns among students, Faculty and staff on campus related to immigration enforcement. A group of students recently held a rally and delivered a list of requests for action on the part of the university. The Chief Diversity Officer and Executive Director for the Office of Equity, Jacqueline Hughers, and Vice Provost of Student Affairs, Sislena Ledbetter, are meeting

with the students to hear more about their concerns. As follow-up, administration has communicated the university policy on immigration protocols on campus and continues to emphasize that the safety of the campus community remains an important priority.

President Randhawa noted that the university is responding to recent public records requests.

Later in the meeting, the Board will be briefed on the status of the legislative session and the efforts to stave off proposed cuts. He thanked Director of Government Relations, Nora Selander, for her persistent work in Olympia. A bicameral and bipartisan Higher Education Caucus has formed, and President Randhawa attended a dinner with that group, hosted by the Washington Education Association. He noted that outreach to post-secondary advocates will continue in-between sessions.

The Federal Budget omnibus package for 2026 includes funding for a research vessel at Shannon Point. President Randhawa thanked Senator Cantwell and Congressman Larson for their support for the funding. Also related to the Federal budget, key funding for important research and for AmeriCorps was maintained.

President Randhawa recently met with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee to discuss a range of issues. He thanked Faculty Senate President, Erika McPhee-Shaw for inviting him to join that meeting. He also met with ASWWU President, Aspen Cates-Doglio, who delivered a letter from the ASWWU Executive Board that raised concerns about recent budget cuts and reorganizations.

In closing, President Randhawa invited Kerena Higgins, AAG, to summarize recent changes in AAG support. Lisa LaGuardia has a new assignment, and Sarah Reyes is now assigned to Western.

9. FACULTY SENATE REPORT

Erika McPhee-Shaw gave a report on the work of the Faculty Senate. She began by sharing that Faculty recently approved English Proficiency standards for International Students and also passed catalog changes that will ease direct-admit to major pathways. The ACC is discussing concerns about first-year seminar changes and has ideas for addressing them. Conversations about Artificial Intelligence continue.

There is a bill that is making its way through the legislature that proposes reviewing and eliminating low enrollment undergraduate programs at public universities. That bill is opposed by the statewide Council of Faculty. Faculty Senate leadership is in conversation with other state universities to articulate concerns.

In closing, she thanked President Randhawa for joining the Faculty Senate Executive Committee meeting. She appreciated the engagement and that President Randhawa

acknowledged that Faculty excellence is at the core of what makes WWU exceptional, and that Faculty participation in the spirit of the university is appreciated.

10. ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY REPORT

Aspen Cates-Doglio gave a report on recent ASWWU activity. He shared that 42 students attended Lobby Day in Olympia. Students had more than sixty meetings with legislators. The priority issue was funding for Western. He noted that more education is needed among legislators on the per student funding issue. Also in government affairs, there is an upcoming Town Hall being held on campus. Representatives Timmons and Lekanoff will be taking questions from students and other constituents. He thanked Nora Selander for her leadership and helping students refine their approach to legislative messaging.

The Executive Committee is assessing the request for a new Athletics Fee. After it is passed by the Executive Committee, the Senate will review it. President Cates-Doglio expects the new fee to be put to students as a referendum on the spring ballot.

President Cates-Doglio then raised a concern that was voiced among S&A Fee committee members related to fee dollars being used to fund a position. The students have requested that the change be routed through the S&A Fee Committee for consideration. He is continuing to learn more about the issue.

He then reported on student actions to oppose Federal immigration enforcement. He commented on the recent ICE OUT event and is looking at how student government can help support the Rainbow Coalition.

President Cates-Doglio then shared concerns about student participation in the WTA negotiations and requested a consistent presence in bargaining sessions.

In closing, President Cates-Doglio delivered a letter to the Board from the ASWWU Executive Committee. He thanked President Randhawa and Board Chair Pettis for meeting with him and talking about the issues raised in the letter.

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

Trustee Ash Awad reported on the January 16, 2026, committee meeting.

Representatives from the external audit firm that Western contracts with CliftonLarsonAllen, presented the results of the 2024-2025 Financial Audit. The audit team reviewed Housing and Dining, the Wade King Recreation Center, and Cabinet expenditures. The audit was clean and CLA staff expressed appreciation for the BFA staff who worked closely with them.

After the exit conference, committee members assessed the performance of CLA over the past two years and discussed whether to extend the contract with them. After discussion, the committee passed a motion to recommend that the Board extend the contract with CliftonLarsonAllen by two years. That action item is on today's Consent Agenda for the Board's approval.

The FARM Committee has been working on updates to its Charter, which was last revised in 2018. The new Charter defines the role and responsibilities of the committee at a high level. The revised Charter that is in today's Board materials is what was approved by the committee and is on today's Consent Agenda with a recommendation for approval by the full Board.

The team from Business and Financial Affairs gave an update on the financial health of the university and identified the level of risk for key indicators. The group from BFA also presented the final FY25 operating budget to actuals and gave a mid-year report for FY26. The committee appreciated the strategic approach to risk assessment.

Chief of Staff Becca Kenna-Schenk gave a summary of the Governor's proposed budget, which included a 1.5% cut for higher ed. She reported on bills that WWU is watching this session and focused specifically on a bill advocating to increase per student funding for Western. Trustee Awad thanked the students who went to Olympia to amplify the message. Nora Selander will be presenting today to give an up-to-date picture of the dynamics in Olympia. The Trustees are committed to engaging with legislators and advocating for Western, even in the face of a challenging state budget situation.

Vice President Joyce Lopes provided updates on the capital budget proposal and the status of the 32nd Street property sale to Whatcom County.

The committee also met with the Senior Auditor, Christy Fazio, to hear updates about ongoing Internal Audit investigations.

12. BOARD ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND STUDENT SUCCESS COMMITTEE REPORT

Trustee and Committee Chair Mo West provided an update from the January 15, 2026, committee meeting.

The Committee has a sharp focus on and commitment to the success of the Strategic Enrollment Growth Initiative and spent a good portion of the meeting receiving updates on the new enrollment strategies that are being implemented. The committee was excited to hear about a new data-sharing agreement with WASAC that will allow Western access to contact information for SNAP-eligible high school seniors in the 5-county pilot region. Those SNAP-eligible students qualify for WAGAP funding and will receive tailored

messages about tuition assistance. The timeline for receiving the data is unknown but Western will be prepared to begin outreach as soon as those students are identified. In addition to the enrollment efforts, the committee also heard about recommendations to increase retention. Trustee West shared that the success of the enrollment initiative is especially critical given the state budget outlook.

The committee learned that the Disability Access Center proctored about 1000 exams over three days at the end of fall quarter. About 20% of students have a registered disability, which is putting pressures on the workload for faculty who provide accommodations. A cross-unit group has been formed to look at ways to help faculty manage this workload.

The committee also heard about the increasing demand for basic needs and food assistance through the Whole Food Pantry. About 2000 students are using the pantry every week, which is up from about 600 students at this time last year. Trustee Awad inquired about the reasons for the sharp increase in food pantry usage.

Chief Diversity Officer and Executive Director for the Office of Equity, Jacqueline Hughes, shared the success of winter quarter programming. She also provided information on an upcoming set of speakers and workshops on communication.

DISCUSSION ITEM

13. LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

Nora Selander, Director of Government Relations, gave a report on state budget dynamics. Western advocates are communicating the impact of earlier cuts and messaging to prevent additional cuts.

She began by sharing that it was day 33 of the 60-day session, and that the intended end date is March 12. Fiscal cutoff has occurred and bills must be passed by their House of Origin by Tuesday of next week. Following those dates, the supplemental budget proposals will be released, reconciled between the House and Senate, then approved and signed by the Governor.

The stated budget outlook forecasts a \$4.3 billion deficit and the Governor's Budget included a 1.5% cut to Western's budget. The high-earner tax and other potential revenue sources are being debated. Even if passed, the revenue benefits would take a few years to realize, and the tax could face hurdles in court or by initiative.

Western's priorities for this session include increasing per-student funding and making gains on the fund split. Director Selander summarized the status of these and other important policy bills that she is tracking.

The newly formed Higher Education Caucus has developed a set of budget principles. The Trustees asked for a list of legislators who are part of the caucus. Trustee Awad is on the Board for the Washington Education Association and asked how that group can assist in communicating Western's priorities. Director Selander thanked President Randhawa, Trustees, students, labor partners and Western Advocates for delivering Western's message in Olympia.

Chair Pettis thanked Nora Selander for her persistence in Olympia and for keeping the Board informed as the state budget takes shape.

ACTION ITEMS

14. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes from December 12-13, 2025
- b. Approval of Contract Renewal: CliftonLarsonAllen
- c. Acceptance of FY2025 Financial Reports
- d. Approval of Finance, Audit and Enterprise Risk Management Committee Charter
- e. Approval of Construction Contract for Communications Facility Data Center, PW815
- f. Approval of 2027 and 2028 Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Schedule

Trustees were invited to pull items on the Consent Agenda for further information or discussion, but nothing was identified.

MOTION 02-01-2026

Trustee Maria Siguenza **MOVED**, that the Board of Trustees, upon the recommendation of the President, and under the individual motion language proposed in the attachments, approve the following items listed on the Consent Agenda.

- a. Approval of Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes from December 12-13, 2025
- b. Approval of Contract Renewal: CliftonLarsonAllen
- c. Acceptance of FY2025 Financial Reports
- d. Approval of Finance, Audit and Enterprise Risk Management Committee Charter

- e. Approval of Construction Contract for Communications Facility Data Center, PW815
- f. Approval of 2027 and 2028 Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Schedule

Trustee Mo West seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0.

15. APPROVAL OF WINTER QUARTER DEGREES

Provost Brad Johnson proudly presented the 365 undergraduate and 39 graduate students who are expected to complete their degrees at the end of Winter Quarter. Winter Quarter graduates are invited to participate in the June Commencement ceremonies.

MOTION 02-02-2026 Trustee Ashlynn Tibbott **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.

Trustee Ash Awad seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0.

INFORMATION ITEMS

16. WRITTEN REPORTS

- a. Academic Affairs Report/Annual Sustainability Report
 - i. Sustainability Action Plan Status Update FY2025
- b. Business and Financial Affairs Report
- c. Advancement Report
- d. Office of Equity Report

Chair Pettis asked Provost Johnson to speak about the data included in the enrollment report. Provost Johnson highlighted a few points of information that could be gleaned from the admissions data. He reported that the outlook for first-year enrollment was positive overall, and that the data on applicants from the 5-county pilot region is promising. He pointed to a notable uptick in confirmed students compared to this time last year. That uptick can be attributed to changing the confirmation fee to a fee that is paid later, upon

enrollment. Staff are working hard to communicate with the pool of confirmed students and assist them through the process of enrolling. Provost Johnson closed by noting that community college transfer rates are looking mixed and the benefits of new agreements may take more time to materialize.

Trustee Awad commented on the many complicated considerations that need to be weighed to synchronize enrollment planning with budget development. He also spoke about the Sustainability Report and thanked the contributors for a thorough assessment of Western's impressive sustainability efforts.

Trustee Siguenza commented that she is happy to see that construction is starting on the Student Development and Success Center. She inquired about the status of contract negotiations with WTA. Vice President Lopes reported that the agreement that is currently being negotiated is for 2026-2027. A longer-term contract would likely have impact on the Active Transportation Fee and would need to be approved by student referendum.

BREAK

DISCUSSION ITEM

17. GRADUATE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Presentation: Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President
Dave Patrick, Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Research
Janelle Leger, Dean of the College of Science and Engineering
Andy Klein, Professor and Department Chair, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
Sean Mulcahy, Associate Professor, Geology Department

Chair Faith Pettis welcomed the presenters and invited Provost Brad to introduce the topic and the presentation team.

Dean Patrick gave an overview of Graduate Program grant funding and some of the impacts of recent federal actions on Graduate Research. Grant expenditures total \$17.7 million and the National Science Foundation is Western's largest grant funder. There is a network of grant partners in the community that strengthens regional opportunities and impacts. Faculty research grants support a critical component to Western's mission and provide student opportunities for hands-on research experience, which is a hallmark of Western's educational brand. NSF Career Grants support much of the faculty research and Western. This exposure to undergraduate and graduate research opportunities inspires Western graduates to go on to earn research Doctorates. Western ranks in the top 10 nationally for baccalaureate and masters granting institutions, public or private,

with alumni earning a research Doctorate. Dean Patrick shared comparative data showing where Western ranks on R&D expenditures nationally, among Masters granting peers, and also in publication output.

Faculty from the long-established Geology Masters Degree Program and the newly established Electrical and Computer Engineering Masters Program, shared information on the structure of their programs, sources of funding, and the research projects that Faculty and Students are engaged with. Upon finishing their degrees, Western graduates have high career aspirations and make big impacts on the regional workforce in industry, the public sector, and in academia.

Trustee Ash Awad inquired about program enrollment numbers and asked why programs are capped at particular levels, especially when the degrees are in high demand in the workforce. The Board learned that the number of Faculty for each program is a limiting factor. Trustee Maria Siguenza asked which programs have flexible scheduling options for working professionals. She also asked about age demographics for Graduate students.

18. TRUSTEE REMARKS

Trustee Ashlynn Tibbott thanked the presenters and commented on the research opportunities students have at Western.

Trustee Ash Awad shared his observations about the excellence at Western and how, even in difficult budget circumstances, the success of students stays at the forefront.

19. DATES FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING: April 9-10, 2026, in Bellingham, WA

The next Regular meeting is scheduled for April 9-10, 2026, in Bellingham, WA.

20. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 11:29am.