



**WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES**

Thursday, April 11, 2024

Location: Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA, Board Room, Old Main 340

Audiocast: <https://wp.wvu.edu/live/>

Time: 10:00 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 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, April 11, 2024 in the Board of Trustees Conference room, Old Main 340, at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington.

Board of Trustees

Faith Pettis, Chair
Chris Witherspoon, Vice Chair
Chase Franklin, Trustee
Max Stone, Trustee
Sue Sharpe, Trustee
Mo West, Trustee
Ash Awad, Trustee (joined at 12:00pm on Zoom)

Western Washington University

Sabah Randhawa, President
Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President
Joyce Lopes, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs
Melynda Huskey, Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services
Donna Gibbs, Vice President for University Relations and Marketing
Kim O'Neill, Vice President for Advancement (on Zoom)
Jacqueline Hughes, Chief Diversity and Executive Director of the Office of Equity
Becca Kenna-Schenk, President's Office Chief of Staff
Kerena Higgins, AAG
Brandon Dupont, Faculty Senate President
Keara Ryan, Associated Students President
Annie Byers, Administrative Assistant to the President's Office and Internal Audit
Rebecca Hansen-Zeller, Executive and Liaison to the Board of Trustees

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Board of Trustees Regular Meeting, February 8-9, 2024
- b. Board of Trustees Work Session, February 26-27, 2024
- c. Board of Trustees Special Meeting, March 12, 2024

Three sets of minutes were presented for approval. No changes were made.

Motion 04-01-2024: Trustee Sue Sharpe MOVED, that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, upon the recommendation of the president, approve the minutes from the following meetings, the February 8-9 Regular Meeting; the February 26-27 Work Session; and the March 12 Special Meeting.

Trustee Mo West seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

As per Amended RCW 28B.35.110, the Board of Trustees provided time for public comment. There was no public comment.

4. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Chair Pettis began her report with a summary of the February 26-27 Board Retreat. The board explored the current higher education landscape nationally and in WA State and discussed strategies for positioning Western to be a nucleation point in our region. The Board engaged in an evaluation of the current strategic plan and determined the goals are still relevant. At today's meeting the Board will consider extending the current plan and continuing the course of pursuing excellence and providing access.

Chair Pettis asked people who attended the Association of Governing Boards Conference on Trusteeship to share their thoughts on what they learned. Some things shared by other trustees were that Western is in a great position in regard to geographic location and political atmosphere, especially regarding ADEI.

That currently there is a 'Meet the Moment' feel nationwide and Boards, presidents, students and institutions are facing difficult challenges. That digital transformation important and IT is a critical strategic element. With the national enrollment cliff approaching are we asking ourselves the important questions of Where are we going? Who is taking us there? Where are we along the way? Boards can foster a greater sense of belonging at their institutions. Accreditation is an important process for continual improvement, the value of higher education versus rising tuition costs, and that leadership turnover is a cause for instability at many institutions.

5. UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT REPORT

President Randhawa reported that in follow-up to the student sit-in at the February 2024 Board meeting, there have been recent meetings with student groups, and more are scheduled. He hopes that those productive conversations can continue.

He also reported on a recent listening session that he hosted with Melynda Huskey. The main issues raised by students at that session were food insecurity, off-campus housing costs and property management concerns.

He continued by thanking Chair Pettis and Trustees Mo West and Sue Sharpe for participating in the accreditation process this week.

President Randhawa noted that the Office of Veteran Affairs was recently audited and had a clean audit. He thanked staff for their hard work with the audit team. He also thanked Chuck Lanham and Shelli Soto for staying on top of FAFSA. He congratulated Joyce Lopes and her team on maintaining and improving our Moody's credit rating. He also acknowledged Senators Murray and Cantwell for their advocacy for gap funding for Kaiser-Borsari Hall.

President Randhawa finished his report by introducing Assistant Attorney General, Kerena Higgins, who in turn introduced her team: Jennifer Marion, Julie Nichol, and Lisa LaGuardia. Each AAG is assigned to handling matters in each Vice President's area and collaborate as needed.

6. ASSOCIATED STUDENTS REPORT

Presentation: Keara Ryan, President, Associated Students

Associated Students President Keara Ryan began her report by thanking President Randhawa for acknowledging the protest at the last Board of Trustees meeting, and also for including student voices in the accreditation process. Gabe Wong is the AS Senate President was also in attendance. Gabe and Keara have worked together on updating the Associated Students governing documents. President Ryan gave a summary of the main changes to the Constitution and Bylaws that will impact the AS structure. Trustees thanked the students for their work on this and requested to see the completed document once it is approved by the student government and President Randhawa.

Keara Ryan also reported on Spring elections for next year's AS leadership. Candidates are filing now. This year's leadership has two goals: to have all positions contested and to increase voter turnout.

To conclude, Keara reported that the Student Trustee candidate review process is underway.

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

Presentation: Trustee Sue Sharpe, Chair, Finance, Audit, and Enterprise Risk Management Committee

Committee Chair Sue Sharpe reported that their Strategic Discussion in February focused on metrics for the University's financial stability and ways to evaluate financial health. Trustee Sharpe reflected on the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) metrics that the committee assessed and areas where Western is categorized on the scale as stable or struggling.

At the March Business Meeting, the committee continued the conversation about the financial statement and financial health. One observation by Trustee Franklin was that we should distinguish between dynamic and static metrics to help narrow our focus. Trustee Franklin also observed that

some of our metrics may need to be adjusted to be both aspirational and attainable. He encouraged a culture of relentless assessment.

At the March meeting, the committee also met with the new external audit team from CliftonLarsonAllen LLP (CLA) and meet with the Interim Executive Director of Internal Audit who shared that a new Senior Auditor was recently hired.

8. BOARD ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND STUDENT SUCCESS COMMITTEE REPORT

Presentation: Trustee Mo West, Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee Chair

Committee Chair Mo West reported on the AASSC March meeting. Janelle Leger, Dean of the College of Science and Engineering, joined the committee and shared her vision for the college and ways to address challenges the college faces. The committee was impressed with her leadership and commitment to College in the High Schools.

The committee also reviewed the Statement of Academic Freedom for Students and helped shape the final document. Jacqueline Hughes reported on the ADEI plan and the future structure for our collective work.

9. FACULTY SENATE REPORT

Presentation: Brandon Dupont, President, Faculty Senate

Faculty Senate President Brandon Dupont reported on a recent forum on Academic Freedom and Free Expression. One of the main points of the conversation was to distinguish between academic freedom and free speech. He also reported on progress with the Faculty Handbook revisions. The Senate will consider approval of the edited Constitution at their next meeting. The preface has already been approved by the Faculty Senate and the by-laws are still under review by the ad-hoc committee. Work on the statement of academic freedom and the ethics portion will continue, likely in the fall. Faculty Senate recently received a budget update from university administration, as well as a report from the standing committee on Outreach and Continuing Education.

Micheal Slouber, President-elect of the Faculty Senate, attended the Board meeting and will assume the role of President at the end of Spring Quarter.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

10. IT MODERNIZATION

Presentation: Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President
Chuck Lanham, Vice Provost for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer

Provost Brad Johnson outlined the large scope and scale of the transition process and the big-picture impact on the operations of the institution. WWU's current ERP is Ellucian Banner, and our

contract expires this year. The question we are facing is how long to extend that contract and what the future will look like. The recommended plan is to extend the current maintenance contract for five years while we procure and implement a cloud-based technology in phases. The readiness assessment, phased implementation, stabilization and optimization will take 5-7 years.

Chuck Lanham shared that we have been on the current system since 1991 and 74 modifications have been made to the base and 91 integrations have been made to connect with other systems. We now have a very complex web of systems. The goal is transformation with many steps along the way. There are two models for system transformation: Best Practices or Customization. He recommends a Best Practices approach.

Members of the Tambellini Group provided considerations for migration to cloud-based technology and is exploring the financial impacts and risks. Chuck Lanham continued by providing information on the broader landscape and what peer institutions are doing.

11. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Presentation: Donna Gibbs, Vice President for University Relations & Marketing

Donna Gibbs introduced the presentation as one of the many ways WWU works to deepen its understanding of and engagement with place. Vice President Gibbs outlined key constituencies and ways we currently engage externally. She shared statistics on our economic impact and information on Boards and Associations where WWU leaders are currently serving. She noted a successful collaboration with the Downtown Bellingham Partnership. She also shared that the multilingual advising service at the Small Business Development Center is a great community resource. Donna Gibbs also spoke about collaboration with K-12 and ctc partners. Goals for the coming year include development of a database of research and applied learning projects, the reinstatement of the Business Engagement Committee and launch of a community impact website. She is also working with leadership to use their board service and organization memberships to create deeper connections and amplify WWU's economic and social impact. One idea that is under discussion is planning a Whatcom County Business Summit, hosted by WWU annually or twice-yearly on various themes.

Vice President Kim O'Neill spoke about Whatcom County alumni and donor engagement.

Trustee Mo West encouraged the group to think about nonprofit engagement and collaborations for health and social service outreach. Trustee Sue Sharpe reinforced aspects of Western's community brand and noted that the Small Business Development Center is a meaningful local service. She inquired about the relationship with the new Mayor. President Randhawa shared that there has been a positive transition and continued cooperation with the city on the Longhouse project. Vice Chair Chris Witherspoon shared that he supported the idea of WWU hosting a business summit and noted that we have faculty, students and expertise to leverage and that we should be exposing businesses to the talent that is at WWU.

ACTION ITEMS

12. AMENDMENT TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2024, 2025, AND 2026

Presentation: Rebecca Hansen-Zeller, Secretary to the Board of Trustees

Rebecca Hansen-Zeller shared a proposed change to the Regular Meeting schedule that would move the October meeting one week later. This will give university administration more time to finalize the fall numbers and prepare the tuition recommendation for the following year.

Motion 4-02-2024: Trustee Max Stone MOVED, that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University amend the regular meeting schedule for 2024, 2025 and 2026 to move the October meeting to the third week of that month.

Trustee Mo West seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

13. EXTENSION OF STRATEGIC PLAN THROUGH 2028

Presentation: Sabah Randhawa, President
Faith Pettis, Board Chair

Chair Pettis explained that the Board met for a work session in February that resulted in an evaluation of the goals of the current strategic plan and determined that those goals are still relevant. Trustee West commented on the excellent summary that clearly captured the direction that Trustees had discussed. President Randhawa echoed that the goals remain as relevant now as ever.

Motion 4-03-2024: Vice Chair Chris Witherspoon MOVED that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, upon the recommendation of the President, approve the 2024 Update to the Western Washington University Strategic Plan as presented. This document reaffirms the Board's commitment to the 2018-2025 Strategic Plan framework and extends the Plan through 2028.

Trustee Chase Franklin seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

14. APPROVAL OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Presentation: Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President
Jack Herring, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs

Provost Johnson explained that during our Year 6 accreditation review, NWCCU recommended that Western develop a statement on academic freedom. The language has been reviewed and shaped by the Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee.

Before the vote, Trustee Stone inquired about specific language in Section 3 and suggested removal of the ethical standard language. Brandon Dupont also raised the well-being language as being

possibly overly broad. The statement language was amended to strike ethical standards and well-being from the final version. With that revision, a motion to approve was made.

Motion 4-04-2024: Trustee Mo West MOVED, that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, upon recommendation of the President, approve the Western Washington University Board of Trustees Statement on Academic Freedom.

Vice Chair Chris Witherspoon seconded. The motion passed 7-0.

15. APPROVAL OF LEASE AGREEMENTS

Presentation: Joyce Lopes, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs

- a. WWU Ground Lease Agreement and Interlocal Agreement with the City of Bellingham for Developing and Operating the Coast Salish Longhouse, House of Healing Building

Vice President Joyce Lopes introduced the lease and interlocal agreement to move forward with the Coast Salish Longhouse, House of Healing project. The city and Sehome Board of Governors have both approved the interlocal agreement. A ground-turning ceremony will be held later this afternoon.

Laural Ballew, Special Assistant to the President and Tribal Liaison, spoke at the City Council meeting earlier in the week. At today's Board meeting, she shared that she is grateful to the city, parks and task force who have all partnered to move the project forward. Today's event symbolizes bringing a home to the Western's community, our Native community and our broader community. She is pleased that this new building will reflect our values and be a welcoming place for our faculty, staff and students. The Board thanked everyone for their support of the project.

Motion 4-05-2024: Trustee Chase Franklin MOVED, that the Board of Trustees, upon the recommendation of the President, amend the Interlocal Agreement and enter into a long-term Ground Lease Agreement to develop and operate the Coast Salish Longhouse, House of Healing Building and associated amenities for a period of seventy-five (75) years, with two optional ten (10) year renewals.

Trustee Sue Sharpe seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

16. APPROVAL OF CONTRACTS

Presentation: Joyce Lopes, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs
Steve Hollenhorst, Associate Vice President for Facilities, Development and Operations
Rick Benner, University Architect / Senior Director, Planning and Development, Facilities Development and Operations

- a. Phase 2 Amendment to Progressive Design-Build Contract for Coast Salish Longhouse, PW774, House of Healing

Vice President Lopes introduced the contract.

Motion 4-06-2024: Vice Chair Chris Witherspoon MOVED that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, upon the recommendation of the President, approve a change order and construction contract amendment for the construction of the House of Healing, Coast Salish Longhouse, to Wellman & Zuck Construction, Bellingham, WA, in the amount of \$3,798,068 (excluding associated sales tax), bringing the contract to a total of \$4,319,675 (excluding associated sales tax).

Trustee Mo West seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

- b. Construction Contract for South Campus Infrastructure and Pedestrian Access Improvements, PW825

Vice President Lopes introduced the second contract for approval.

Motion 4-07-2024: Trustee Sue Sharpe MOVED that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, upon the recommendation of the President, award a contract to Trimaxx Construction Incorporated, Sedro Woolley, WA, in the amount of \$1,274,000 (plus associated sales tax) for the construction contract for the construction of upgrades to existing vehicle access roads, pedestrian infrastructure, and utility extensions.

Vice Chair Chris Witherspoon seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

- c. Construction Contract for Edens Hall (EH) Electronic Safety and Telecom Upgrades, PW810

The third contract was introduced by Vice President Lopes.

Motion 4-08-2024: Trustee Chase Franklin MOVED that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, upon the recommendation of the President, award a contract to Dutton Electric Company, Inc., Lynnwood, WA, in the amount of \$540,500 (plus associated sales tax) for the construction of the Fire Alarm replacement and telecom upgrades at Edens Hall.

Trustee Mo West seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

- d. Construction Contract for Birnam Woods Apartment Siding and Bridge Replacement Phase 2, PW812

The fourth and final contract was introduced by Vice President Lopes. Chair Pettis inquired about MWBE consideration and Rick Benner explained how removal of affirmative action consideration in public works limits our discretion and require us to go with the lowest bidder. Chair Pettis also noted that some projects did not receive any MWBE bids and participants discussed targeted efforts by Western, as well as more broadly, to assist businesses and gain more MWBE representation.

Motion 4-09-2024: Trustee Mo West MOVED that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, upon the recommendation of the President, award a contract to Dawson Construction, Bellingham, WA, in the amount of \$2,359,700 (plus

associated sales tax) for the construction contract to perform the following work at Birnam Wood: (i) replace the siding and bridges and add insulation at Stacks 1 and 2, and (ii) replace the siding and add insulation at the Laundry Building.

Vice Chair Chris Witherspoon seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

INFORMATION ITEMS

17. LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

Presentation: Nora Selander, Director of Government Relations

Director of Government Relations, Nora Selander, gave a post-session report. The 60-day session ended on March 7, 2024. She reported on higher education bills that passed and relayed that most of them were related to college access and affordability. Public health and opioid awareness was another area that received funding. Washington College Grant eligibility was also extended from five to six years, and we expect the State to continue considering ways to expand eligibility for the program. Director Selander also noted two Promise bills that did not pass but will generate further discussion in future sessions for a statewide program.

A budget overview of where funding was secured was shared. Funding was included for undergraduate computer science, an outreach initiative, fentanyl education, a Holocaust & Genocide Studies project, and our cyber range. Nora Selander also reported on the Capital asks and shared that minor works preservation and Kaiser-Borsari Hall were funded. Classroom and lab upgrades were not funded. President Randhawa noted that the full state funding will not be needed for Kaiser-Borsari thanks to federal funding that was secured by Senators Murray and Cantwell.

Director Selander concluded with an overview of the initiatives that will be on the ballot in November. Three of the six initiatives that were on the table earlier in the year have been enacted by the legislature, three more will be put to voters this fall. Ballot results could impact funding for key projects, including our heating conversion project.

Trustee Awad asked about the potential rollback of the Climate Commitment Act and whether there is any ability to recoup any of the previously allocated funding. Nora Selander shared that Western and other colleges with allocations from the CCA anticipate taking a \$10 million loss.

18. WRITTEN REPORTS

- a. Enrollment Management Summary
- b. University Advancement Report
- c. Capital Program Report
- d. University Relations and Marketing Report
- e. Professional Leave Report

Trustee Mo West asked Shelli Soto for a report on FAFSA and how Western is helping students navigate hurdles resulting from errors on the federal submission process. Shelli gave a report on the communication and technical work being done to ensure Western's future students complete their

FAFSA by the deadline. Western's confirmation date has been moved to June 1 and we are on-track to meet that deadline.

19. TRUSTEE REMARKS

20. EXEMPT SESSION AS AUTHORIZED BY RCW 42.30.140(4)(a)

Chair Pettis called an Exempt Session at 2:30pm for one hour. The Board returned to public session at 3:09pm.

21. DATES FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for June 13-14, 2024 in Bellingham, WA.

22. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:11pm.