



**WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
WORK SESSION  
February 26-27, 2024**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Faith Pettis called the meeting of the Western Washington University Board of Trustees to order at 10:01am.

**Board of Trustees**

Faith Pettis, Board Chair  
Chris Witherspoon, Vice Chair  
Ash Awad, Trustee  
Mo West, Trustee  
Chase Franklin, Trustee  
John Meyer, Trustee  
Sue Sharpe, Trustee

**Western Washington University**

Sabah Randhawa, President  
Brad Johnson, Provost, and Executive Vice President  
Becca Kenna- Schenk, President's Office Chief of Staff  
Kim O'Neill, Vice President of Advancement, President, and CEO of The Foundation for WWU and Alumni  
Rebecca Hansen-Zeller, Secretary to the Board of Trustees

**2. GOALS FOR WORK SESSION**

President Sabah Randhawa shared his observations about contemporary issues that lend themselves to a timely review of our strategic plan and an evaluation of how it resonates in the current environment.

He stated four reasons and goals for the work session:

1. The current strategic plan sunsets in 2025 and there is a need to provide operational clarity beyond the current life of the plan.
2. Case statements for a fundraising campaign are currently under development that require institutional priorities for the next few years.
3. We need to continue to evaluate our position and ensure that we are serving Washington's students and maximizing our impact.
4. We need to prepare for leadership transitions and chart a long-term course for stability.

**3. POSITIONING WWU FOR THE FUTURE: REVIEW OF HIGHER ED LANDSCAPE**

Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President and Becca Kenna-Schenk, President’s Chief of Staff, led the Board through a series of slides and discussion. They began by sharing data on college enrollment and degree attainment trends in Washington State. The data highlighted a large gap between the number of students who say they want to pursue post-secondary education and the number who actually attain a credential.

The presenters also explored the concept of system design and looked at consolidation trends and turf wars happening in other states. Within that context, they highlighted a few colleges and universities that have become nucleation points in their regions. Those colleges have bucked declining enrollment trends within their state’s higher education ecosystem and are gaining inertia in systems that are otherwise struggling or going through changes.

Two case studies were examined in detail: University of Wisconsin Green Bay and James Madison University in Virginia. Both schools have become nucleation points and have pursued different paths to gain enrollment. UW Green Bay has focused on access and increasing pathways and partnerships to offer broad access to higher education. JMU has pursued a path of excellence and selectivity and focused on experiential learning and strong student and faculty relationships.

The Board took a break for lunch from 12:01pm to 12:33pm.

**4. POSITIONING WWU FOR THE FUTURE, CONTINUED**

Brad Johnson and Becca Kenna-Schenk continued to lead the discussion of how WWU can expand access while maintaining excellence. The Board had a robust discussion about how to define access, success, and excellence. They also spent time defining the problem that WWU will play a role in solving. They discussed ways WWU can maintain enrollments despite changing demographics on WA State and across the country, as well as ways WWU can play a role in developing a college-going culture in WA State.

The Board took a break from 2:13-2:45pm.

**5. REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Board discussed a set of initiatives to keep the strategic plan on track for the next 3-5 years. The Board affirmed that the overall direction of the plan is solid and reaffirmed the core strengths of the university. The Board also solidly stated that WWU has a role in expanding local impact and playing a proactive role in the future success of our region. President Randhawa will review the metrics and make adjustments to the targets as part of the end-of-year review process.

**6. THE FOUNDATION FOR WWU AND ALUMNI, CAMPAIGN OUTLOOK**

Kim O’Neill, Vice President of Advancement, President, and CEO of The Foundation for WWU and Alumni, joined the Board. The Foundation is currently working with a consultant to develop a case

statement for a campaign. Potential campaign goals may include raising \$200-250 million over 6-8 years to support student scholarships, retention programming, mental health and wellness services, Graduate Programs, undergraduate research stipends and endowed positions.

The meeting adjourned for the day at 4:43pm.

**7. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Faith Pettis called the meeting of the Western Washington University Board of Trustees to order at 8:03am.

**Board of Trustees**

Faith Pettis, Board Chair  
Chris Witherspoon, Vice Chair  
Ash Awad, Trustee  
Mo West, Trustee  
Chase Franklin, Trustee  
John Meyer, Trustee  
Sue Sharpe, Trustee

**Western Washington University**

Sabah Randhawa, President  
Rebecca Hansen-Zeller, Secretary to the Board of Trustees

**8. REFLECTIONS ON STRATEGIC PLAN AND NEXT STEPS**

President Sabah Randhawa began by summarizing take-aways from the previous day's discussion. The Board agreed to reaffirm the direction of the strategic plan and provide guidance for a three-year extension of the plan. The goal is to increase access as we continue to strive for excellence.

President Randhawa offered to consult with Cabinet, Faculty Senate, and others. A summary document will be drafted for adoption at the April 2024 Board meeting. In the meantime, President Randhawa and his team will adjust the current metrics and explore adding a new metric to track enrollment of underserved student groups in Washington State.

**9. BOARD BUSINESS**

Faith Pettis, Board Chair then led the Board in a discussion about Trustee succession.

The Board also agreed to change the Secretary to the Board of Trustees position title to Executive and Liaison to the Board of Trustees.

**10. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chair Pettis called for a 30-minute Executive Session as authorized by RCW 42.30.110(1)(g), at 10:08am.

The Board returned from Executive Session at 10:38am.

**11. TRUSTEE REMARKS**

Trustee Ash Awad provided a brief update on the steam plant conversion project and factors that could impact funding for the project.

**12. DATES FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING**

The next Regular meeting of the Western Washington Board of Trustees is scheduled for April 11-12, 2024, in Bellingham, WA

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 10:49am.