



**WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
February 8 and 9, 2024**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Pettis called the February 8, 2024, meeting of the Western Washington University Board of Trustees to order at 3:00pm in the Old Main Board Room, OM340, in Bellingham, WA.

**Board of Trustees**

Faith Pettis, Board Chair  
Chris Witherspoon, Board Vice Chair  
Ash Awad, Trustee  
Chase Franklin, Trustee  
Max Stone, Trustee  
Mo West, Trustee (on Zoom)

**Western Washington University**

Sabah Randhawa, President  
Kerena Higgins, Assistant Attorney General  
Becca Kenna-Schenk, Chief of Staff, President's Office  
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 & Marketing  
Kim O'Neill, Vice President for Advancement and CEO of the Foundation for WWU and Alumni  
Jim Sterk, Director of Athletics  
Jacqueline Hughes, Chief Diversity Officer, and Executive Director for the Office of Equity  
Chuck Lanham, Vice Provost for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer  
Faye Gallant, Assistant Vice President for Strategy, Management and Budget  
Annie Byers, Administrative Assistant to the Board of Trustees and Internal Audit  
Rebecca Hansen-Zeller, Secretary to the Board of Trustees

**2. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MODERNIZATION**

Provost and Executive Vice President, Brad Johnson, introduced an overarching question: How does WWU do business? He explained that our current data management system has evolved over time into a complex system that includes a number of administrative processes that have been added on to the original platform. This complexity makes change from the current platform difficult to manage. Provost Johnson explained that most large institutions are now moving to cloud-based technology for data management. With careful strategic planning, we now have the time to manage the change thoughtfully.

Chuck Lanham, Vice Provost for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, shared that WWU has contracted with Ellucian Banner since 1991, and the current contract expires in June 2024. Western has substantial infrastructure to support the current system, including 65 servers on campus to maintain our data. This is a heavy system compared to cloud-based options that are now available. WWU has contracted with the Tambellini Group to consult on the transition.

A demonstration, organized as part of a national day of student action, then took place in the Board Room. WWU leadership acknowledged the students' concerns regarding the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza and supported their right to express themselves peacefully. The Chief Diversity Officer and other members of the WWU administration extended an invitation to the student organizers for a meeting to discuss their concerns and explore next steps together.

The Board of Trustees meeting adjourned at 3:35pm and reconvened at 3:59pm.

### **3. CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGIC VISION PLAN**

Vice President Joyce Lopes gave background on the Capital Development and Strategic Vision Plan project and informed the Board that this plan will guide our facilities planning for the next 10-15 years. The team from NAC Architecture introduced themselves. Brodie Bain presented findings from the initiation and discovery phases of the project. The team has met with nearly fifty groups on campus to gather information on capital needs. Common themes that emerged included: limited expansion of the footprint over the next 10-15 years, careful analysis of enrollment growth trends, and actively increasing different types of use of the campus.

The recommendations made in the final report will align with the three main pillars of the Strategic Plan: advancing inclusive success, increasing Washington impact, and enhancing academic excellence. Guiding principles of the plan include providing high quality space in the appropriate quantity, creating new ways to enhance the campus community experience, clearly establishing a campus and university identity, and sustainability and stewardship. The report assumes a 5-year enrollment goal of 16,500 students and a 10-year goal of 20,000-22,000 students.

Trustees engaged in robust discussion about the project and asked questions about how satellite locations will be considered for future planning and how Okanogan Charter principles will be integrated into the planning. Trustees inquired about the total build-out capacity of the main campus and how WWU compares to other institutions in terms of the ratio of students per square foot. Trustee Awad asked about decarbonization and how the city and university utility infrastructure and our Heating Conversion Project is being intentionally considered in this report. Trustee Franklin raised affordable housing as part of our strategic planning and Chair Pettis affirmed that the university wants to play a role in addressing housing affordability for students, Faculty, and staff.

The NAC consultants plan to present the final report to the Board of Trustees in December 2024.

The meeting adjourned for the day at 4:51pm.

#### 4. CALL TO ORDER, APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Pettis called the February 9, 2024, meeting of the Western Washington University Board of Trustees to order at 8:00 am in the Old Main Board Room, OM340, in Bellingham, WA.

##### **Board of Trustees**

Faith Pettis, Board Chair  
Chris Witherspoon, Board Vice Chair  
Ash Awad, Trustee (joined at 8:27am)  
Chase Franklin, Trustee  
Max Stone, Trustee  
Mo West, Trustee  
John Meyer, Trustee (on Zoom)  
Sue Sharpe, Trustee (on Zoom)

##### **Western Washington University**

Sabah Randhawa, President (on Zoom)  
Kerena Higgins, AAG  
Becca Kenna-Schenk, Chief of Staff, President's Office  
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 & Marketing  
Kim O'Neill, Vice President for Advancement and CEO of the Foundation for WWU and Alumni  
Jim Sterk, Director of Athletics  
Jacqueline Hughes, Chief Diversity Officer, and Executive Director for the Office of Equity  
Chuck Lanham, Vice Provost for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer  
Faye Gallant, Assistant Vice President for Strategy, Management and Budget  
Annie Byers, Administrative Assistant to the Board of Trustees and Internal Audit  
Rebecca Hansen-Zeller, Secretary to the Board of Trustees  
Brandon Dupont, Faculty Senate President  
Keara Ryan, Associated Students President  
Shelli Soto, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management  
Liam Pratt, AS Vice President for Sustainability  
Priya Sall, Interim Executive Director of Internal Audit  
Nora Selander, Director of Government Relations

MOTION 02-01-2024 Trustee John Meyer MOVED, that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, upon the recommendation of the president, approve the following minutes from December 7 and 8, 2023.

Trustee Mo West seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0. Trustee Ash Awad was not present for the vote.

## 5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Four speakers signed up for public comment.

Colleen Ryan is an operational student employee. They spoke to a recent letter that was sent to WWU administration asking to be recognized as a bargaining unit. There are over 1300 operational student employees working on campus. Educational student employees are recognized and have bargaining rights, and the speaker advocated for similar recognition for operational student employees.

Abby Matthews also spoke about operational student employee requests. She shared that due to low wages, students have difficulty balancing academic priorities and employment needs. They argued that this is an issue of equity and asked to be recognized as a bargaining unit.

Abby Place is an operational student employee at the recycling center. The students there spoke about health and safety concerns related to the very-necessary jobs that students perform. They asked to be recognized and bargained with.

The final student spoke about the need for training and positive work experiences to launch a student's professional career. They shared that there are power disparities between students and supervisors and asked for WWU to discuss the working conditions and begin bargaining with the operational student employees.

Chair Faith Pettis thanked the speakers for their comments and will follow-up with administration on the topic.

## 6. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Chair Faith Pettis followed-up on the issues raised by the students who spoke about divestment at the December 2023 meeting. The Board is following the issue and representatives have met with Foundation leadership. Chair Pettis voiced support for the new website that the Foundation has established and thanked students for their engagement.

Chair Pettis then invited the trustees who attended Regents & Trustees Day in Olympia to share reflections on their meetings with legislators. Trustee Mo West thanked the staff who planned the day and reported that the higher-education messages were well-received by the legislators she met with. One issue of concern was related to statewide initiatives that could have an impact on Western's future funding sources. Trustee Max Stone reported that Western was well-regarded among legislators and trustee peers from other institutions. Vice Chair Chris Witherspoon reported that there was discussion among the other regents and trustees in his group about Western's positive enrollment trends. Chair Pettis also spoke to Western's positive reputation in Olympia and reported that legislators understood higher education needs and some were even working on bills that the coalition was advocating for.

Chair Pettis commented that she looks forward to the Scholarship Dinner being rescheduled. She also updated the Board on the Western Crossing Development Corporation is officially closed and had a clean audit. She also invited students to apply for the Student Trustee position.

## **7. UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT REPORT**

President Sabah Randhawa invited Provost Brad Johnson to update the Board on Faculty who have recently been promoted or awarded Tenure. Provost Johnson reported that fifty cases came forward for consideration this winter: twenty-seven were moved to Full Professor and twenty-three to Associate Professor. Provost Johnson reflected on the quality of the faculty who submitted dossiers.

Vice President Melynda Huskey reported on challenges in the first few months of the Chartwells contract, and changes that are being implemented to improve food service on campus. She reported on personnel changes and a list of remediation items that are being addressed by the new leadership. Vice President Witherspoon asked about how the university can use social media and other channels to communicate the improvements that have been made.

## **8. FACULTY SENATE REPORT**

Brandon Dupont, President of the Faculty Senate, highlighted a few issues that are front of mind in Faculty Senate. These issues include the impact of Artificial Intelligence in the classroom, Academic Freedom, and the Faculty Handbook revisions.

Faculty are responding to AI in a range of ways, some are banning its use, others are integrating it, and many are adjusting their assignments and assessments in response to this emerging technology. President Dupont reported that workload is a related concern to managing AI. He also raised a technology component to the issue. The Senate's Academic Technology committee and the Western Coalition for Integrity will examine the issues in more depth.

Faculty are planning a forum on Academic Freedom and Free Expression. The forum will highlight the importance of having difficult conversations about controversial issues and building a culture of respect and open exploration of academic freedom.

The Faculty Handbook and related documents are under revision by a committee. The first set of proposed changes are under review by the Faculty Senate and the goal is to complete the work by the end of Spring Quarter.

Trustee Ash Awad asked what conversations are happening in classrooms on the Israel and Palestine conflict in Gaza. Brandon Dupont shared information on recent teach-ins, curriculum connections and activism on campus. The upcoming form on Academic Freedom and Free Expression seeks to take a broader scope when examining those relevant issues.

## **9. ASSOCIATED STUDENTS REPORT**

Keara Ryan, President of the Associated Students updated the Board on important items related to student government. She reported a high-degree of engagement with student clubs and events this year, and shared that funding is running low to support these activities. President Ryan spoke about AS support for the operational student employees and a recent Resolution that was passed on that topic. The Associated Students are also poised to adopt a Resolution asking for dining halls to accommodate students during Ramadan. Student Lobby

Day is coming up and a large number of students plan to go to Olympia to lobby for student priorities.

The completed work on the AS Charter will be presented to the Board today. President Ryan explained some of the operational changes that are underway to align the Charter with the Constitution and other governing documents.

Lastly, President Ryan invited Liam Pratt, AS Vice President for Sustainability, to speak about student support for divestment. Vice President Pratt raised issues related to transparency and stated that he is hopeful that the new website aids in that effort and encouraged even more accountability toward increasing communication and transparency. He asked the Foundation to reconsider allowing more student involvement in the investment advisory process. AS President Ryan echoed concerns about finding ways for students to engage in the advisory process. Both student leaders were appreciative of the opportunity to open new dialog and meet with Foundation leaders.

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

Chris Witherspoon, Vice Chair and Finance, Audit, and Enterprise Risk Management Committee Member, provided an update on the recent activities of the FARM committee. The committee has met twice since the December Board meeting. The focus of the strategic discussion in December was on IT Security, the recent security assessment, and the future of our systems as we explore cloud-based options for data management. At the January Business Meeting, the committee approved three items that were referred to the Board for action today: the 2023-24 Audit Plan, the external audit contract, and the final financial statement audit for July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023. The committee discussed the current contract approval process and the balance between keeping projects moving forward and the need for Board review. Committee members expressed a preference for avoiding delegations of authority whenever possible and want to discuss other procedural options for reviewing and approving construction contracts at a future meeting.

Committee Chair Sue Sharpe thanked Joyce Lopes and her staff for their work to support the needs of the committee. She also thanked Trustees Franklin and Awad for their work during the RFP process to select a new external auditor. She also thanked Priya Sall for serving in the interim Internal Audit role.

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

Trustee Mo West, Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee Chair, shared details of the recent work of the committee with the Board. The last meeting began with a visit from Athletic Director, Jim Sterk, who shared his leadership philosophy and aspirations for Athletics at WWU. The committee also discussed the NWCCU Year-6 finding that requires the university to develop a statement on academic freedom for students and reviewed a draft of that proposed statement. The committee also heard about how student support services, student health and wellness services, and advising are working together to increase student success and retention. The committee also heard about how student-centered ADEI initiatives and multicultural services are working toward common goals. Finally, the committee received updates on

structural support for Associated Students and the status of the Chartwells contract management.

## 12. CAMPUS UPDATES

### a. 2024 Supplemental Legislative Session

Nora Selander, Director of Government Relations, thanked the Trustees who attended Regents & Trustees Day and emphasized that their advocacy has impact. She provided an update on budget asks and strategies for building broad support for our requests. Budget leadership is signaling that it is a tight budget year and being that it is also a supplemental year, no major new expenditures are expected. Director Selander continued by reporting on statewide initiatives that are moving through the process to get on the November 2024 ballot and that could have impact on sources of funding for WWU. Director Selander concluded by giving an overview of bill activity, and highlighted bills that are starting a conversation about statewide promise programs for high school students who graduate and attend a community or technical college.

### b. Enrollment Update for Winter Quarter and Fall 2024

Shelli Soto, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management, gave an overview of Winter enrollment and highlighted our trending improvement in Fall to Winter retention this year. Levels of academic distress (warning, probation, dismissal) are also trending downward in a positive direction and are now on par with pre-pandemic levels. Among first-year students, there is a larger percentage who are in good standing than we have had in six years, which also bodes well for retention. Associate Vice President Soto credited these trends to the team of support specialists working across campus to optimize retention through a variety of direct tactics.

Associate Vice President Soto shared projections for Fall 2024 and talked about recruitment for new students. Application and acceptance rates are tracking comparable to last year, which was a record-high for applications. She shared her concerns about the FAFSA delays and told the Board about mitigation efforts WWU is making, including deadline adjustments and additional communications to students and families, to minimize impacts on Fall enrollment.

Shelli Soto concluded with a brief report on the Guaranteed Admissions Program and our pilot program with high schools in Mount Vernon and Ferndale. She discussed the supplemental program that targets students with a GPA between 2.75-2.99. Seventeen students at Mt. Vernon were identified for the supplemental program and Western is working with them to apply. Ferndale's supplemental program will launch shortly.

### c. WWU Peninsulas

Becca Kenna-Schenk, Chief of Staff, President's Office, began with updates on the building in Poulsbo. The Board previously approved a predesign contract and that predesign report will be sent to Office of Financial Management by July 1. Chief of Staff Kenna-Schenk reported that a design/construction capital budget request for the 2025-27 will be the next item for Board approval. She added that negotiations with Olympic College are underway related to the ground lease and the search for the academic administrator for Western on the Peninsulas is being launched.

d. ADEI Work

Jacqueline Hughes, Chief Diversity Officer and Executive Director for the Office of Equity, shared information about her work toward the development of an institutional plan to create an ADEI framework. The goal is to create structural alignment and bring greater collaboration and coordination to ADEI work across the institution. She also reported on work being done to plan a community and skill building conference for Western faculty, staff, and students in May 2024. Finally, she reported on the creation of a set of student, faculty, and staff profiles to share their diverse experiences of individuals going to school and working at Western.

e. NWCCU Accreditation Visit

Jack Herring, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, reported on the upcoming site visit by NWCCU that is scheduled for April 10-12, 2024. In preparation for that visit, the Year-7 self-study will be posted on the website and submitted to NWCCU in the coming week. As part of the evaluation process, Trustee representatives will meet with the visiting team to discuss issues related to mission fulfillment.

WWU's last comprehensive review was in 2017 and six recommendations were made following that visit. Other than an outstanding question about campus planning, the other five recommendations that were made after that visit have been addressed and resolved. Trustees inquired about ways the university has already tried and are continuing to attempt to address the outstanding recommendation.

A briefing document providing Trustees with data and talking points will be provided prior to the visit.

f. Infrastructure Projects

Joyce Lopes, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs, began by highlighting the work of the President's Sustainability Council and progress being made toward goals set in the 20-year plan that was adopted in 2017. Connecting that work to the strategic budgeting process is the next important step to strengthening our commitment to decarbonization. Vice President Lopes reviewed the status of campus infrastructure projects that are underway including Kaiser-Borsari Hall, the House of Healing, and the Student Development and Success Center. She also noted that the Environmental Studies building is in the predesign process for renovation. Progress continues on the Heating Conversion Project and the search for an Owner Advisor is underway. Classroom upgrades and other updates to aging infrastructure also continue.

g. Mid-Year Fiscal Update

Joyce Lopes, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs, shared tuition projections compared to budget assumptions and also shared expenditures. Vice President Lopes reported that the budget remains stable and work continues to address reserve requirements. She anticipates we will end this fiscal year with reserves of 7%.

The Board took a break at 10:11 am and reconvened at 10:30 am.



**ACTION ITEMS**

**13. APPROVAL OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2025-26**

MOTION 02-02-2024 Trustee Mo West MOVED, that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University establish the following regular meeting schedule for the year 2025 and 2026:

2025:  
February 13, 14, 2025  
April 10, 11, 2025  
June 12, 13, 2025  
August 14, 15, 2025  
October 9, 10, 2025  
December 11, 12, 2025

2026  
February 12, 13, 2026  
April 9, 10, 2026  
June 11, 12, 2026  
August 13, 14, 2026  
October 8, 9, 2026  
December 10, 11, 2026

Vice Chair Chris Witherspoon seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0.

**14. APPROVAL OF CONTRACT FOR EXTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES**

MOTION 02-03-2024 Trustee Chase Franklin MOVED, that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, upon the recommendation of the President, approve the FY 2023 contract for CliftonLarsonAllen LLP to provide external audit services for Western Washington University.

Trustee Ash Awad seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0.

**15. ACCEPTANCE OF FY 2023 FINANCIAL REPORTS**

MOTION 02-04-2024 Trustee Ash Awad MOVED, that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, upon the recommendation of the President, accept the WWU FY 2023 Financial Reports.

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

**16. APPROVAL OF FY24 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN**

MOTION 02-05-2024 Trustee Chase Franklin MOVED, that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, upon the recommendation of the Finance, Audit and Enterprise Risk Management Committee, and the President, approve the FY 2024 Internal Audit Plan.

Vice Chair Chris Witherspoon seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0.

**17. APPROVAL OF WINTER QUARTER DEGREES**

MOTION 02-06-2024 Trustee Max Stone 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 Winter Quarter 2024, effective March 10, 2024.

Trustee Ash Awad seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0.

**18. APPROVAL OF 2024 SUMMER SESSION TUITION**

MOTION 02-07-2024 Vice Chair Chris Witherspoon MOVED, that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, on recommendation of the President, approves the recommended Summer Session tuition for 2024 as a 3% across the board rate: specifically, that resident undergraduate and graduate tuition will rise to \$299 and \$381 per credit, respectively; and non-resident undergraduate and graduate tuition will increase to \$475 and \$557 per credit, respectively. Tuition rates for programs for the MBA program are estimated not to exceed the approved rates from the academic year: \$439 per credit for resident graduate and \$1,096 for non-resident. Student tuition will be charged on a per credit basis for Summer Session.

Trustee Ash Awad seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **19. STUDENT GOVERNMENT CHARTER**

Sabah Randhawa, Western Washington University President, thanked Associated Students President Ryan and her team for prioritizing this complicated project. Vice President Melynda Huskey also complemented the team of students who worked on this project. Keara Ryan, Associated Students President, shared more about the history of the project, ways the new document provides clarity, and some of the changes that the new charter implements.

### **20. WRITTEN REPORTS**

- a. Enrollment Management Summary
- b. University Advancement Report
- c. Capital Program Report
- d. University Relations and Marketing Report
- e. Mid-Year Housing and Dining Report
- f. Sustainability Report

The Board Chair asked if the Trustees had any questions or comments on the written reports received in the Board materials. Trustee Mo West inquired about the community engagement component of the Sustainability Report.

Chair Pettis asked Donna Gibbs, Vice President for University Relations & Marketing, and Kim O'Neill, Vice President for Advancement, for any comments.

Donna Gibbs, Vice President for University Relations & Marketing, shared FAFSA-related advertising statistics and reported an outstanding 1000% growth in conversions or actions taken since this time last year. She also reported on increased engagement on LinkedIn and looks forward to sharing information on the Community Engagement Plan with the Board.

Vice President for Advancement, Kim O'Neill, informed the Board of two events coming up soon to celebrate Catharine Stimpson's engagement with WWU and the formation of our new Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department. She also encouraged attendees to nominate alumni for this year's Alumni Awards.

### **21. TRUSTEE REMARKS**

Chair Faith Pettis thanked Vice Chair Witherspoon for working with staff to set goals and prepare for the Board Retreat at the end of February. The Board will also have a social dinner with Foundation Executive Board members.

Trustee Ash Awad shared reflections on the student engagement during yesterday afternoon's session. He thanked Chief Diversity Officer Hughes for the proactive ways she engaged with the students. Trustee Chase Franklin echoed that he was also moved by the demonstration.

**22. DATES FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING**

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

**23. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 11:04 am