

**Western Washington University  
Board of Trustees  
Special Meeting Minutes  
Friday, September 8, 2017**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Board Chair, Sue Sharpe called the special meeting of the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University to order at 8:32 am at the Washington Athletic Club, in Seattle, WA.

**Board of Trustees**

Sue Sharpe, Chair  
Earl Overstreet, Vice Chair  
John Meyer, Secretary  
Chase Franklin  
Karen Lee  
Trista Truemper  
Mo West

**Western Washington University**

Sabah Randhawa, President  
Brent Carbajal, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Richard Van Den Hul, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs  
Stephanie Bowers, Vice President for University Advancement  
Melynda Huskey, Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services  
Donna Gibbs, Vice President for University Relations and Marketing  
Barbara Sandoval, Assistant to the President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees  
Rayne Rambo, Assistant Secretary to the Board of Trustees

Cathy A. Trower, President, Trower & Trower, Inc.

**2. WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS**

Chair Sharpe welcomed Cathy Trower, President, Trower & Trower, Inc. to the board's work session, delivered opening remarks and provided an outline of the expectation for the day's meeting.

**3. STRATEGIC PLANNING DISCUSSION WITH TRUSTEES AND UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP**

Chair Sharpe introduced the topic for the meeting which was centered on the universities strategic plan. She said that it has been ten years since the university has gone through the strategic planning process and is the first time for the present board of trustees. Sharpe

thanked those present in the room for the work that has already been completed internally regarding the strategic plan, including outreach and research collected from the campus community that is reflected in the materials. She added that the objective of the meeting, with facilitation from Cathy Trower, was to define the board's role in the strategic planning process, discuss the future of higher education, and the unique opportunities for Western moving forward.

President Randhawa led the conversation with his observations from the strategic planning process and the outcomes from those processes. He stated that over the past three years the university has gone through major efforts that have formed the framework of the strategic planning process that includes the work related to the presidential search. That work included an analysis of Western's Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats (SCOT) and the creation of the presidential profile. He reminded the board that the comprehensive accreditation review process provided an assessment of critical areas within the university. Both of these exercises have provided critical data for the strategic planning process. Randhawa also noted that the strategic planning process allows for a unique opportunity for shared governance with faculty and engagement of the broader campus community. Randhawa also stated that it has been an opportunity to engage together as a team in governance. He added that the strategic planning process is an opportunity to challenge the institutional culture. Randhawa added that it is an opportunity to see that there are ways to enhance, challenge and change the thinking in ways that we have not done in the recent past.

Chair Sharpe noted that the goal for the work session was for the board to become grounded in the process that has been proposed, and determine how the board will work through the process. Sharpe also noted that the larger aspirational goals for the university would be a priority for the work session.

President Randhawa added that the strategic plan would be reviewed on an annual basis to assess whether the university has or has not made progress on the key goals of the strategic plan.

Cathy Trower, provided an overview of the strategic planning process on a national level and how other universities are structuring their performance metrics of their strategic plans on an annual basis. Trower led the discussion regarding successful strategic planning and covered the following topics:

- Clear and comprehensive grasp of external opportunities and challenges
- Realistic and comprehensive assessment of the organization's strengths and limitations
- An inclusive approach
- An empowered planning committee
- Involvement of senior leadership.
- Sharing of responsibility by board and staff members
- Learning best practices
- Clear priorities and implementation plan
- Patience
- A commitment to change

The president, trustees and the vice president's collaborated in a discussion on the aspirational goals of the university and strategic planning for the university. It was agreed that the strategic planning process is an opportunity to define and in some cases redefine student access, student success and impact. Creating and defining a common vocabulary that would link the culture and vision of the university and achieve opportunities and to overcome challenges. It was also agreed that the strategic planning process needs to deliver a plan that is relevant to future generation of the university by looking at the bigger picture for the future of the university.

Chair Sharpe announced a break at 11:58 a.m. The board returned and reconvened the meeting at 12:32 a.m.

#### **4. STRATEGIC PLANNING DISCUSSION WITH TRUSTEES AND UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP, cont.**

The continued conversation was centered around access and affordability, opportunities for students, and quality education. The group collectively discussed ways and opportunities to improve the Western experience and to support both graduate and undergraduate students. There was also discussion on improving the international student program enrollment and experience and improving the overall enterprise of the international student programs.

The leadership team discussed the importance of academic excellence and what that means for Western and Western students. The team spent time defining excellence and how to incorporate excellence into every student's education and experience at Western.

President Randhawa closed the conversation by outlining the remainder of the process and the board's engagement. He stated that the Strategic Planning Committee will gather to hear the input from the Board of Trustees. Randhawa added that the Strategic Planning Committee will present the plan to the campus community for a final round of input to ensure elements have been taking into consideration in mid-October. A revised draft version of the Strategic Plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees again in December 2017.

Chair Sharpe announced a break at 1:54 p.m. The board returned and reconvened the meeting at 2:16 p.m.

#### **5. BOARD GOVERNANCE**

Chair Sharpe introduced the next agenda item which included a self-assessment and board structure including sub-committees.

Cathy Trower provided an overview of a recent self-assessment of the board. The self-assessment provided insight into the working relationship of board membership and the campus perception of the Board of Trustees. The trustees spent time discussing their leadership role at the university and defining the value of the board. It was agreed that the board's work in the

sub-committees contributes to the board's sense of engagement and participation on issues that are important to the university.

The board spent time discussing the sub-committee structure within the Board of Trustees. It was determined that the Audit Committee is evolving and that taking a deeper dive into strategic areas of oversight leads to a more effective committee. The board discussed at length the role of the Governance Committee and its potential restructure to better support academics and student success.

Trustee Sharpe summarized the conclusions of the conversation by confirming that the goals of the Audit Committee would be to incorporate finance/risk management and the goals of the Governance Committee would move in the direction of academic and student success. It was agreed that these would be the priorities for the two sub-committees moving forward.

The meeting adjourned at 4:42 p.m.