

**Western Washington University
Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
Friday, February 14, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair Earl Overstreet called the Friday, February 14, 2020 meeting of the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University to order at 9:10 a.m. in the Meisnest Room at the Washington Athletic Club in Seattle, WA.

Earl Overstreet, Chair
Chase Franklin, Vice Chair
John Meyer, Secretary
Faith Pettis
Hunter Stuehm
Karen Lee
Mo West
Sue Sharpe

Western Washington University

Sabah Randhawa, President
Stephanie Bowers, Vice President for University Advancement
Donna Gibbs, Vice President for University Relations and Marketing
Brian Burton, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
Brian Sullivan, Interim Director, Office of the Internal Auditor and Associate Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs
Jeff Young, Faculty Senate President
Melissa Nelson, Assistant Attorney General
Paul Dunn, Chief of Staff to the President, Secretary to the Board of Trustees
Rayne Rambo, Assistant Secretary to the Board of Trustees

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION 02-01-2020 Trustee Franklin moved that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, upon the recommendation of the President, approve the following minutes:

- Board of Trustees Meeting, December 12, 13, 2019

The motion passed.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

As per Amended RCW 28B.35.110, the Board of Trustees provided time for public comment. No one signed up for public comment.

3. DISCUSSION WITH WASHINGTON ROUNDTABLE AND WASHINGTON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Steve Mullin, President of the Washington Roundtable, Jeff Vincent, member of the Washington Roundtable and Chair of the Washington Student Achievement Council, Brian Jeffries, Policy Director, Washington Roundtable, and Marc Casale, CEO & Founder Kinetic West joined the Board of Trustees to share their reflections about Washington State House Bill 2158, the Workforce Education Investment Act, recent conversations with higher education leaders about the goals and implementation of HB 2158, and engage in dialogue about how boards can work with their institutions to advance post-secondary attainment in Washington State.

Chair Overstreet announced a ten minute break at 10:21am and the board reconvened at 10:35am

4. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Board Chair Earl Overstreet provided the following report:

‘Yesterday the trustees had a very productive work session. We started with a debrief from Cathy Trower regarding the 2019 Comprehensive (3-year) 360-Degree Review of President Randhawa. Cathy is the external consultant responsible for conducting the review. Her review included a broad cross-section of constituents and consisted of:

- An online survey of 7 trustees and 8 direct reports
- Telephone interviews with 35 individuals including trustees, direct reports, faculty, staff, students, and external constituents.

Cathy’s Executive Summary begins with the following statement:

“President Randhawa is a rare president on many fronts and the entire community feels fortunate to have him at the helm of Western during these challenging times for higher education.”

Sabah shared his reflections regarding the review and the challenges ahead for Western. This portion of the work session concluded with feedback and discussion.

The next agenda item was a review of topics from the Self-Assessment conducted by the trustees in September. Committees were the first area we discussed. Ad hoc committees were suggested as a way to accomplish more work without creating more permanent committees. We will try this approach to tackle some governance tasks instead of re-establishing a governance committee. The FARM committee will discuss the possibility of adding a non-trustee with finance, audit, and/or risk management experience to the committee. All three existing committees are continuing to work on improving their effectiveness.

Trustee development and the annual meeting schedule were tabled for a future work session.

The work session closed with an interactive discussion with the VP's regarding Strategic Plan Implementation. The group agreed that the pace of change at Western has increased, challenging existing resources. At the same time, opportunities to magnify Western impact exist and the needs of the State of Washington call for an even faster pace of change

That concludes my report.”

5. UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT REPORT

President Randhawa acknowledged that Western has recently received classification as a Carnegie Community Engaged University, which is an elective designation that indicates institutional commitment to community engagement. President Randhawa explained that Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) opened up an “Innovation and Economic Prosperity University Designation” to universities outside of the standard APLU requirements and that Western was awarded this designation with four other universities. He noted that even more important than the designation itself, it gives Western the opportunity to network with other Land-Grant Universities and have conversations centered on engagement and economic development which is a positive direction for Western.

President Randhawa addressed the snow closures that were implemented earlier in the year. He noted that the five day closure had financial impacts on classified employees and the university community was very supportive and empathetic in their response to support these employees. He said the situation required the engagement of both classified unions; Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE) and Public School Employees of Washington (PSE) that have bargained agreements that include inclement weather. He reported that union leadership and Western Human Resources leadership came together to discuss the situation outside of the bargaining cycle in the hopes of a resolution.

President Randhawa introduced Melynda Huskey, Vice President of Enrollment and Student Services who provided an update on the Martin Luther King Day breakfast and thanked the committee for their talented work that lead to double attendance numbers and inaugurated Western's First Day of Service that included community service projects in the Bellingham area.

Huskey reported on Western's COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus response as it is now officially an epidemic. She said that Western has a well-developed, existing plan for epidemic and pandemic response. As soon as Western received appropriate signaling from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), a interdisciplinary response team was formed that included County Public Health Department, City Officials, University Officials with emergency response, and health and safety expertise to review Western's plan in the event Western would need to move in that direction. She noted that there have been no reported cases in Whatcom and Skagit counties. She added that there have been carefully targeted public health communications on how students can take action if they are concerned or would like more information to consider their exposure and provide education on the virus.

Huskey highlighted that the Enrollment and Student Services Student Advisory Council met for the first time since its inception. She explained that the diverse council consists of fourteen students that volunteered to serve and bring forward topics that range from university structure, university budget, and university decision making processes, to be discussed with her on a monthly basis.

6. ASSOCIATED STUDENTS REPORT

Lani DeFiesta, Associated Students President was not present to provide a report.

7. FACULTY SENATE REPORT

Jeff Young, Faculty Senate President reported:

With winter break and the snow week, Faculty Senate and other governance bodies have met relatively few times since the last board meeting, so my report will be somewhat brief today.

1. **The Library Subscription Task force reported to both UPRC and Faculty Senate.**

The issue at Western, and campuses across the country, is the rapid inflation of subscription costs. If current base funding, at \$2,000,000 a year, does not change, there is a projected \$300K+ shortfall in FY21 (16.6% of subscription expenditures). \$80K+ each in FY22, FY23, and FY24,

- The task force in coordination with the library is working to develop a more sustainable approach to managing library subscriptions,
 - Advocating for funding,
 - Find best practices for cuts, as well as finding the means to add new subscriptions (no new subscriptions have been added for 5 years),
 - Working on longer term solutions by identifying ways to change the scholarly publishing landscape.
 - More: <https://library.wvu.edu/satf/subscriptions-task-force>

2. **Budget.** Faculty leadership, including the Faculty Senate, has been in conversations with the administration concerning the university's budget. I want to thank President Randhawa and Provost Carbajal for their engagement in this discussion, and specially thank Vice President Van Den Hull and by extension, his team. They have been very generous and patient with their time in preparing information, and walking faculty from various backgrounds through financial documents. Faculty certainly appreciate the leadership and good stewardship provided by the administration and the board that has kept Western financially healthy. At the heart of the discussion is the funding of Academic Affairs:

- This was prompted, in part, by the announcement of a \$3.25 million deficit in Academic Affairs. This announcement generated discussion across campus that in some areas resulted in the assumption of financial crisis and the advent of cuts. With the help of Rich and his crew, we understand and are happy to share the news that this is not the case. We are also encouraged by the addition of \$4.2 million dollars to the 2021 Academic Affairs budget.
- I am advocating now and faculty will continue to organize and advocate for ample funding. Academic Affairs is the heart of the university, full funding is required to sustain current programs and to improve the work we do in meeting the university's mission.

3. Suspended Operation Policy

- Faculty are concerned about current Suspended Operations Policy and the affect it has on Western's classified staff. The Faculty Senate and the Graduate Council unanimously endorsed the following message from the United Faculty of Western Washington President Rich Brown, and the UFWW Exec:

Dear President Randhawa & Provost Carbajal,

The UFWW Executive Committee joins other leaders across campus who are calling for a change in our Suspended Operations Policy. As you have heard from classified staff, faculty, chairs, and deans, the current policy is unjust and treats a whole group of university employees inequitably.

UFWW urges the administration to change the Suspended Operations Policy in order to create pay equality for our classified staff on campus, and to alleviate the unnecessary harm caused to their families resulting from loss of pay due to university closures.

Sincerely,
Rich Brown, UFWW President
Members of the UFWW Executive Committee

4. **Credit Hour Policy** For the last decade, accreditors have been subject to increased pressure and scrutiny from the U.S. Department of Education when it comes to their evaluation of credit hour assignment.

In 2017, the Academic Coordinating Commission sought to address concerns by revising the Credit Hour Policy. The 2017 policy has raised new problems and concerns without fully alleviating those that occasioned it.

ACC has proposed a new policy, now under review by the faculty senate, the most critical goal of which is facilitating and simplifying alignment of Western's policy and its current scheduling practices.

Credit hour policy might seem like a dry topic, however it sits at the juncture of several important issues. One of the key intersections is between the block schedule, space, and credit hours. In particular, it is becoming more difficult scheduling 5-credit hour courses in the current block schedule. As a first step, ACC and the Faculty Senate has requested, and

the Registrar has offered to perform an audit, using 25Live to assess how the block schedule and classroom space intersect.

All of this has led to lively debate in the Senate. I hope to bring back news of good outcomes at the next board meeting.

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

Trustee John Meyer, Chair, Finance, Audit and Enterprise Risk Management (FARM) Committee reported that FARM committee reviewed the FY20 Financial Statements and noted the good work of Business and Financial Affairs to present the information in a way that allow the committee members to have a high level review of the statements. He noted that the discussion was centered on measuring financial health including Western's primary reserve ratios. He added that there was discussion on operating margin ratios that include net capital and that ratio continues to improve. Meyer confirmed that Western is in a healthy financial position. He proposed that the full Board be provided a presentation on financial oversight and a future board meeting.

Meyer reported that the committee received an overview of the current Housing and Dining System (the System) with an emphasis on identifying the level of operational and space resources necessary to accommodate enrollment growth and align with the University's Strategic Plan. He added that the System is assessing its capacity to meet student housing demands, make programmatic space improvements, and address deferred maintenance for a number of buildings that were largely built fifty years ago. Meyer noted that there would be presentation to the full board at a future meeting.

9. BOARD STUDENT SUCCESS COMMITTEE REPORT

Trustee Mo West, Chair, Student Success Committee reported that the topic of Decision Packages and the background on the proposal process. She noted that the Decision Package process is part of the Western Biennial Operating Budget request to the Legislature and that they are the avenue through which Western seeks funding for academic programs. Recent examples include the Electrical Engineering expansion, the Institute for Energy Studies, and the Student Success funding package.

West reported that the Student Success committee received an overview from on how decision packages are envisioned, developed, vetted and ultimately prioritized for Western's budget requests to the Legislature. She said there was discussion on the process and how to better involve staff and students throughout the process.

Trustee Stuehm expanded on West's remarks, and suggested finding more ways of including staff and students in the life cycle of the decision package, and that at present the conception input is centralized around the faculty. He noted that there was conversation on how to incorporate more student ideas and contributions to the pre-proposal process, giving students the opportunity to weigh in on growth they see in academic enterprise at Western.

APPROVAL OF PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS

Earl Overstreet, Board Chair reported that in the time that materials were submitted for the meeting, the actual construction bid was proposed and accepted, so the initially proposed agenda item delegating authority for contracting up to a certain amount was no longer needed. He noted that the board would proceed by submitting a proposed motion for awarding a construction contract.

Brian Sullivan, Associate Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs noted that the construction contract bid was lower than original bid estimate and this would be the first of five requests for awarding construction contracts for construction of the Interdisciplinary Science building.

MOTION 02-02-2020 Trustee Pettis moved that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, upon recommendation of the President, award a contract to BNBuilders Inc., Seattle, WA, in the amount of \$3149,475 (plus associated sales tax) for bid package #1 (earthwork and utilities) for the Interdisciplinary Science Building project.

The motions passed.

10. CONSENT ITEMS

The following Consent Items were presented for approval:

- Approval of Winter Quarter Degrees
- Approval of Honorary Degree at Spring 2020 Commencement
- Approval of Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule for 2021-2022

MOTION 02-03-2020 Trustee West 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 2020, effective March 21, 2020.

The motion passed.

MOTION 02-04-2020 Trustee Stuehm moved, that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University, upon the recommendation of the President and the faculty, approves awarding an honorary doctorate degree to Denis Hayes, in recognition of his

extraordinary contributions to building international awareness and action for environmental protection, and for his distinguished career in public service.

The motion passed.

MOTION 02-05-2020 Trustee Sharpe moved, that the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University establish the following meeting schedule for the year 2021 and 2022:

February 11, 12, 2021

April 1, 2, 2021

June 10, 11, 2021

August 19, 20, 2021

October 7, 8, 2021

December 9, 10, 2021

February 10, 11, 2022

March 31, April 1, 2022

June 9, 10, 2022

August 18, 19, 2022

October 13, 14, 2022

December 8, 9, 2022

The motion passed.

11. WATERFRONT UPDATE

Donna Gibbs, Vice President for Communications and Marketing and Brad Johnson, Dean of the College of Science and Engineering provide the board an update on the Waterfront Project. Johnson reported that the College of Science and Engineering has been in dialogue with several potential tenants for the Western Crossing Innovation Park concept, including federal and state agencies who have ongoing research projects and talent pipeline established with Western.

12. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Becca Kenna-Schenk provided the Board with an update on the 2020 Legislative Session that began on January 13th and is scheduled to end on March 12th. Kenna-Schenk reported that

Western's supplemental operating budget request seeks to improve access for current and future students attending Western on the Peninsulas (WOtP) by transitioning degree programs from a tuition or self-supported funding model to a state-supported model. She noted that if the proposal is funded, tuition rates for most WOtP degree programs would be reduced and all the WOtP resident undergraduate students would begin paying the same tuition rates as Western resident undergraduate students in Bellingham and Everett. She added the request would also enable Western to improve four-year degree pathways for the residents of Kitsap and Olympic Peninsulas through targeted recruitment and student support strategies.

Kenna-Schenk additionally provided an overview of Western's policy priorities in the 2020 legislative session that includes the passage of House Bill 1755, authorizing Western to offer applied doctorate degrees in education (EdDs), and passage of Senate Bill 6139/House Bill 2721, legislation to reauthorize the state's Joint Center for Aerospace Technology Innovation, a public-private partnership that has supported at least \$750,000 in research grants between Western and its Plastics and Composites Engineering program and regional aerospace industry partners. She added that Western and other higher education partners are also supporting Senate Bill 6492, legislation that would modify the revenue source for the Workforce Education Investment Account, the dedicated fund for higher education investments that was created during the 2019 legislative session.

13. INFORMATION ITEMS

a. Quarterly Report on Grants and Contracts

Provost Carbajal provided a written report with information for the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs concerning grant awards.

b. University Advancement Report

Vice President Bowers provided a written report on the University's Alumni Relations and Western Foundation activities

c. Capital Program Report

Vice President Van Den Hul provided a written report on the University's capital projects.

d. University Relations and Marketing Report

Vice President Gibbs provided a written report documenting recent activities of University Relations and Marketing.

e. Annual Department of Public Safety Report

Vice President Van Den Hul provided a written report with an annual update of the Department of Public Safety.

f. Mid-year Housing & Dining Report

Vice President Huskey provided a written report regarding the University's housing and dining system.

g. Admissions and Enrollment Report

Vice President Huskey provided a written report regarding the university's general enrollment and admissions.

14. DATES FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING

April 16 & 17, 2020

15. ADJOURNEMENT

The meeting adjourned at 12:03 pm.