



**WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
December 7 and 8, 2023**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Pettis called the December 7, 2023, 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, Chair
Chris Witherspoon, Vice Chair
Sue Sharpe, Trustee
Chase Franklin, Trustee
John Meyer, Trustee
Max Stone, Trustee
Mo West, Trustee
Ash Awad, Trustee

Western Washington University

Sabah Randhawa, President
Joyce Lopes, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs
Nora Selander, Director of Government Relations
Jeffrey Grant, Assistant Attorney General
Kerena Higgins, Assistant Attorney General
Jacqueline Hughes, Chief Diversity Officer & Executive Director for the Office of Equity
Jack Herring, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
Brandon Dupont, President, Faculty Senate
Melynda Huskey, Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services
Donna Gibbs, Vice President of University Relations & Marketing
Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President
Kim O'Neill, Vice President for Advancement, President of the Foundation for Western Washington University & Alumni
Becca Kenna-Schenk, Chief of Staff, President's Office
Annie Byers, Administrative Assistant to the President's Office and Board of Trustees
Rebecca Hansen-Zeller, Secretary to the Board of Trustees

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board of Trustees met with legal counsel for an update on pending litigation as authorized by RCW 42.30.110(1)(i). No action was taken.

3. MISSION FULFILLMENT

The Board of Trustees reconvened at 3:37pm. Chair Faith Pettis welcomed participants to the meeting and introduced the afternoon topic of Mission Fulfillment, as it connects to the April 2024 Accreditation visit from our accrediting body, The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU).

Associate Vice President Jack Herring began with an overview: Western Washington University is currently finishing our Year-7 report to the NWCCU, which represents the final stage in the 7-year accreditation cycle. The Year-7 Report is focused on Mission Fulfillment. It is a snapshot of where we sit right now along a 7-year cycle of continuous assessment and improvement. Associate Vice President Herring outlined the standards that NWCCU will be using to evaluate Western. He shared current dashboards measuring inclusive student success, and he explained the impacts of the covid pandemic on our progress toward enrollment and retention targets.

Associate Vice President Herring shared first year retention rates and corresponding 4 and 6-year graduation rates. He fielded questions from Trustees about factors that impact timing and completion rates. The two main factors that students cite for leaving Western between the first and second year are mental health challenges and insufficient funding for tuition and basic needs. To calibrate the institution's retention expectations, Provost Johnson presented data on the nearly 10% of incoming students who report that they are likely to leave Western before completion. He also offered reasons why students who enroll here, might eventually plan to leave. Provost Johnson offered data on various explanatory factors such as High School GPA, Pell-eligible students, whether a student lived on campus the first year, etc. and how those indicators impact first-year retention.

Associate Vice President Herring highlighted data on WWU graduates and the number of high-demand degrees that are awarded. Western's contribution to state-defined needs remains significant.

The impacts of covid on student academic preparation and social development were discussed. Associate Vice President Herring described how intrusive advising, Math co-requisite options, and now an English co-requisite pilot option are all offered to assist with pre-college development needs.

Chair Pettis asked how the Trustees can engage with the data that was presented and connect it to the Accreditation visit. President Randhawa suggested the development of a short pitch that briefly describes Western's mission and shares a few key strategies we are employing to improve retention. Trustee Sharpe agreed that a narrative would be helpful.

Trustee Awad asked how Western compares to its peers on key metrics. President Randhawa offered that we stand out among the other regional universities in Washington and are only behind University of Washington and Washington State University in our outcomes.

In his final slide, Associate Vice President Herring shared progress toward Equity outcomes and what Western is doing to address the needs of students. A draft of the Year-7 report will be ready to share with the Trustees in January 2024.

The meeting adjourned for the day at 4:50pm.

4. CALL TO ORDER, APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Pettis called the December 8, 2023, meeting of the Western Washington University Board of Trustees to order at 8:00am.

Board of Trustees

Faith Pettis, Chair
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Chase Franklin, Trustee
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Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President
Kim O'Neill, Vice President for Advancement, President of the Foundation for Western Washington University & Alumni
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Annie Byers, Administrative Assistant to the President's Office and Board of Trustees
Rebecca Hansen-Zeller, Secretary to the Board of Trustees

Motion 12-01-2023 Trustee Mo West made the motion to approve the minutes. 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.

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

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

The Board of Trustees agenda provides for public comment per Amended RCW 28B.35.110, also known as the Open Public Meetings Act. Chair Pettis announced that six individuals had signed up to speak for public comment. She asked speakers to keep their comments to two-minutes each.

Kathryn Williams, A WWU Student, addressed the Board and encouraged WWU to be leader in sustainability and move to a 100% fossil free investment portfolio. She encouraged the University to be innovative and pursue a sustainable investment portfolio that is aligned with the mission.

Liam Pratt serves as the AS Vice President for Sustainability. He shared an AS Resolution in favor of continued divestment from fossil fuels that 778 supporters have signed onto. He encouraged an alignment of the Foundation's investments with the University's values. He asked the Board of Trustees to work with the Foundation to increase transparency, increase accountability, and further divest from fossil fuels.

Seddie LeBlanc spoke on behalf of the Students for Renewable Energy and Students for Climate Action. She advocated for full divestment from fossil fuels. She cited students, alumni and community support for divestment and encouraged the Board of Trustees to join in advocacy for that position.

Jamie Richards cited that 55% of the University's investments are currently divested. Jamie asked for transparency in the remaining 45% of investments and requested a seat at the table for students and faculty to review and make recommendations on investments.

The next speaker urged the Board to help prepare students for a future that is habitable. Climate change impacts will be catastrophic without change. They shared that investment in fossil fuels is not aligned with the University's values.

The final speaker explained how divestment aligns with social norms and the University's stated mission.

Chair Pettis thanked the speakers for their coordinated messages and acknowledged the students showing their support for divestment outside the on the Old Main lawn.

6. BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Chair Pettis updated the Trustees on the Delegation of Authority that was granted in October 2023 for predesign of the Environmental Studies Building and that the contract has since been executed. She also shared that the Board completed a performance evaluation for the Secretary to the Board of Trustees, Rebecca Hansen-Zeller. Finally, Chair Pettis announced that Priya Sall has agreed to serve as the Interim Executive Director of the Office of Internal Audit.

7. UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT REPORT

President Randhawa reported on the predesign work for the new building in Poulsbo. As part of the agreement with Olympic College, there will be an analysis of buildable sites on their Poulsbo campus. He shared that he met recently with small cities mayors in Whatcom County. The

discussion at that meeting centered around county-wide housing needs, and WWU access pilots that are being offered in some local high schools. President Randhawa concluded by acknowledging the students who organized today's engagement on the topic of Environmental, Social, and Corporate Government (ESG) investments.

President Randhawa introduced Katie Potts, Associate Vice President for Security and Chief of Police. He and Vice President Lopes offered a warm welcome and praised her for the strong leadership and significant impacts since she joined the team in January 2023. Trustee Sharpe thanked Chief Potts for her collaboration with the Bellingham Police Chief.

8. FACULTY SENATE REPORT

Faculty Senate President Brandon Dupont began his report by introducing and thanking new officers and staff. He congratulated Michael Slouber on being elected Vice President and President-Elect of the Faculty Senate. He also welcomed Becky Johnston as the new Faculty Senate Specialist who will be supporting the body's work. Dupont thanked Elissa Hicks for filling in while the permanent search was underway.

Brandon Dupont continued by reporting on various Faculty Senate standing committees including the Outreach & Continuing Education committee and the Library Committee. He reported on the work of the Ad-Hoc Committee that is revising the Faculty Handbook, a document that was last updated in 2008. President Dupont also reported on the University Planning and Resource Council (UPRC) restructure.

Brandon Dupont highlighted a few other issues for the Board's attention: Artificial Intelligence continues to be under discussion and committees are in the fact-finding stage of policy recommendations; Faculty are monitoring the development of a statement of academic freedom and are sensitive to free expression within the current political context; and finally, he added thoughts on the divestment initiative.

9. ASSOCIATED STUDENTS REPORT

Associated Students President, Keara Ryan, reported that the Student Government Charter is in the process of being revised and will come to the Board in February 2024 as an Information Item. A Vice President for Activities was recently hired, which is a critical position for interfacing with student clubs. Students are currently being surveyed to identify legislative priorities to inform the agenda that is being presented in Olympia. Some identified priorities include financial aid needs, health and wellness requests including broader access to Narcan and medication abortions on campuses, and technology initiatives.

Keara Ryan and other AS Leaders are responding to students who feel unsupported in an atmosphere where international violence and humanitarian crises are having big impacts. Decompression spaces are one way student government is trying to combat student stress. The Associated Students has also signed on to a Resolution in support of a Ceasefire.

President Ryan expressed an interest in working with the Foundation on transparency and divestment from fossil fuels. Board members thanked President Ryan for organizing positive and constructive engagement on difficult issues.

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

Trustee Sue Sharpe, Committee Chair, thanked Vice President Lopes and other leaders for working with the committee as they reprioritize and redefine the committee's role. Chair Sharpe shared a summary of the recent committee meeting and the data that was shared on enrollment, capacity in key programs, and resource alignment. The FARM Committee has been involved in the development of a Reserve Policy, which is on the Board's agenda today for adoption. Committee Chair Sharpe reported on the process for selecting the new external auditor. She also gave a brief update on the Heating Conversion Project.

The FARM Committee will meet for a focused strategic discussion next week on Information Technology Infrastructure and Information Technology Security.

Trustee Ash Awad thanked Chair Sharpe for her leadership in making sure the committee stays focused on the right issues. He remarked on the enrollment discussions that the FARM committee and Board are engaged in and acknowledged the thoughtful work staff is doing to think about the needs of our current students.

11. BOARD ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND STUDENT SUCCESS COMMITTEE REPORT

Trustee Mo West, Committee Chair, reported on the most recent committee meeting. The Dialog with a Dean series continued with Deanna Kennedy joining the committee from the College of Business and Economics. In preparation for the Accreditation visit in April, the committee also met with John Krieg for an in-depth review of the institutional metrics and performance outcomes.

Chair West thanked Donna Gibbs and Jacqueline Hughes for their updates on the campus climate, and for their responsive and caring messages to students, employees, and the broader community.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

12. CAMPUS CLIMATE UPDATE

President Randhawa and Chief Diversity Officer Hughes provided the Board an update on the climate on campus during Fall Quarter 2023.

President Randhawa recently served on a panel where he shared remarks on how universities are confronting local impacts of international violence, challenges related to free expression, and how the safety of every community member is always paramount. He commented on the complexity of the geo-political forces at play, and the opportunities for learning.

Jacqueline Hughes gave more specific information on events that have occurred on campus and resources that are being made available to students. She spoke about increasing capacity in the Western community for courageous and respectful dialogue that is at the heart of a constructive learning environment. Chief Diversity Officer Hughes connected this to the need for increasing trust and cohesion among the campus community.

Jacqueline Hughes spoke about the need to provide resources for BIPOC-identifying students in a way that does not further marginalize members of those communities.

Trustee Ash Awad shared his observations about what he described as an eggshell moment in the Middle East and the role of WWU as an institution of education for helping students understand the context and learn how to dialog with others. Trustee Awad expressed encouragement to create an environment to crush the eggshells, be brave, and have constructive conversations. Other Trustees followed-up with comments of support for building capacity to take risks and create dialog.

13. CONVERSATION WITH FACULTY LEADERSHIP

Chair Pettis welcomed Peter Pihos, President, United Faculty of Western Washington and Brandon Dupont, President, Faculty Senate.

Peter Pihos introduced himself and shared the values and priorities of the over 900 Faculty who are represented by UFWW. He encouraged investments in teaching, learning and research. He cited the cost-of-living crisis and housing costs as the number one issue among faculty, and as a barrier to recruiting diverse faculty. Pihos explained the effects of workload creep, and the impacts of managing more disability accommodations in the classroom. He also cited a desire for more information on the University budget and more influence over the budgeting process.

Brandon Dupont echoed many of the points raised by Peter Pihos, and further emphasized the workload issues and accommodation requirements. He shared a desire for greater communication and transparency on the University budget and resource allocation decisions. The UPRC restructuring is one way to address problems that have been identified. Brandon Dupont also identified free speech and academic freedom as issues that are on the forefront of Faculty minds right now. Artificial Intelligence is another area that is challenging Faculty to think differently and adopt new policies.

Trustee Mo West inquired about disability accommodations and what solutions would help address the workload associated with increasing needs for accommodations. Peter Pihos talked about lowering barriers in the classroom through universal design and addressing the problem at a macro-level that involves training and education for Faculty on how to holistically assess accessibility in their classrooms. The Disability Access Center is a great resource for Faculty, but more staff resources are needed to provide individualized attention to the students and Faculty they work with.

Trustee Stone asked if there are categories or types of courses that have a greater number of disability accommodation requests. Peter Pihos shared observations on how accommodations impact Faculty in different ways depending on their discipline and the requirements of their area of study. He shared that about 20% of current students have accommodation needs. Melynda Huskey shared that this number accurately reflects the proportion of people who are impacted by disabilities.

Trustee Ash Awad asked about the impacts of covid and how the University is preparing to work with students who experienced learning loss during the pandemic. Brandon Dupont and Peter Pihos grappled with the question and shared their observations on how we work with enrolled students to persist to graduation.

Chair Pettis concluded by thanking the presenters for sharing their thoughts on the challenges Faculty face and for partnering on the solutions. Provost Johnson and President Randhawa also praised the exceptional contributions of Faculty at WWU.

ACTION ITEMS

15. APPROVAL OF UNIVERSITY RESIDENCES COMMONS GENERATOR UPGRADES, PW 789

Motion 12-02-23 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 \$1,000,040 (plus associated sales tax) for the construction contract for new generator systems for multiple university commons buildings.

Trustee Mo West seconded. The motion passed 8-0.

16. APPROVAL OF BOARD POLICY ON OPERATING BUDGET RESERVE

Vice President Joyce Lopes outlined the new Board-level policy, which establishes a 10% reserve target. This item was referred from the FARM Committee.

Trustee Sue Sharpe read Resolution 2023-06 and made the motion to approve the new policy.

RESOLUTION 2023-06: OPERATING BUDGET RESERVE POLICY

WHEREAS, the Western Washington University Board of Trustees is vested with full authority to manage the assets and affairs of the University.

WHEREAS, the Board's powers and duties are granted by Washington State law, in particular the Revised Code of Washington Chapter 28B.10 and 28B.35 (RCW 28B.10 and 28B.35) and other statutory provisions.

WHEREAS, the Board engages in responsible institutional governance by the proper exercise of its fiduciary duties to the institution.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of Western Washington University that the attached Operating Budget Reserve Policy is formally adopted.

Motion 12-03-23 MOVED that the Board of Trustees approve Resolution 2023-06, Operating Budget Reserve Policy.

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

17. APPROVAL OF FALL QUARTER DEGREES

Provost Brad Johnson presented the undergraduate and graduate candidates who are eligible for degrees.

Trustee Max Stone made the motion to approve the 2023 Fall Quarter degrees.

12-04-23 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 Fall Quarter 2023, effective December 16, 2023.

Trustee Mo West seconded. The motion passed 8-0.

INFORMATION ITEMS

18. 2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION PREVIEW

Nora Selander, Director of Government Relations, presented her pre-session report. The legislature is scheduled to convene on January 8, 2024, for a short supplemental session.

WWU's top operating budget requests include funding to support academic access and outreach, electrical and computer engineering program expansion, and expansion of College in the High School. Director Selander will report back on these budget asks and provide policy updates during her mid-session report at the February 2024 meeting.

19. WRITTEN REPORTS

- a. Enrollment Management Summary
- b. University Advancement Report
- c. Capital Program Report
- d. University Relations and Marketing Report
- e. 2023 Annual Security and Fire Safety Update (Clery Act)
- f. Access, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Report

The Trustees reviewed the reports. Chair Pettis thanked Jacqueline Hughes for her ADEI report, which will be submitted twice-yearly moving forward. Trustee Franklin inquired about data contained in the enrollment report related to transfer-students. Melynda Huskey explained that the community college transfer pipeline is not as strong as it has been historically, and that drying pipeline is impacting our transfer recruitment from 2-year institutions. Trustee West asked about the pilot programs that give direct admission to qualifying graduates. Shelli Soto shared information on the supplemental pilot that we are pursuing with Mt. Vernon and Ferndale High Schools.

20. TRUSTEE REMARKS

Fall Commencement is Saturday, December 16, 2023. Many of the Trustees will be on campus to celebrate with the graduates.

21. DATES FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING

The Board will meet next on February 8-9, 2024, in Bellingham, WA.

22. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:52am.