

Western Colorado University Ad Hoc Committee for Actionⁱ

Recommendations (Approved by Board of Trustees on 2-4-2021)

Ad Hoc Committee purpose: To bring a recommendation to the full Board of Trustees (BoT) on actions to address the campus conversations at Western that ensued after the events in Washington DC on January 6th.

Context of Situation:

- **Passionate** students, faculty, staff, administration, President, Trustees, and community (the "**WCU community**") care for Western and **want all stakeholders (especially students) to succeed.**
- Nation, state, WCU community, and the Gunnison **community** are **under great stress** from pandemic health issues, economic challenges, racial injustice, political conflicts, police violence against people of color, protests that turned to violence, miscommunications, censorship concerns, and more.
- **Changes to Higher Education landscape** (reduced state funding , reduction in birth rate challenging enrollment, students and parents want lower costs and higher value that delivers students prepared for the workforce).
- **New Engineering program** in partnership with the University of Colorado (CU) is an acknowledgement of **shifts in Higher Education expanding beyond traditional liberal arts** curriculums.
- We have **emphasized growth and fiscal responsibility**, and now must include more attention to emotional intelligence and human skills.
- **Sensitivity to core messages** and how the WCU community communicates.
 - There are many different interpretations. Some people feel silenced and are disappointed.
 - Some constituents (including Student Government Association) request Western administration and trustees to have uncomfortable conversations to combat racism and other social injustices, state that real issues exist, unite around common goals, and take a stronger stance to cultivate an equitable, diverse, and inclusive campus.
- Western **established the DEII committee** in 2018 to facilitate development of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Internationalization, posted a DEII statement on our website, and more work is underway.
- Inconsistent understanding of Western's **shared governance model.**

Align around Common Goals:

- Continue focus on goal of helping students thrive
- Create awareness and respect for all differences, including political
- Need to listen, respect, be open, and unite the WCU community
- Apply shared governance among key stakeholders
- Live true to our Free Expression Policy
- Strengthen the culture of 'One Western, Many Voices'
- Develop vision and values consistent with the best interests of the University, and live true to them.

Continue and Complete Actions underway:

- **Continue DEII Committee Charge:** Western's DEII Committee exists to turn our diversity statement into action. Continue the journey and bring forth recommendations. Approve and fund DEII efforts which may include hiring a Chief Diversity Officer.

- **Reconvene** Ad Hoc Board of Trustees '**Meeting Efficiencies, Bylaws and Policy**' committee to review and help update other portions of Trustee Policy Manual (TPM), as stated below.
- **Review relevant Governor Executive Orders.** As State of Colorado employees, Western employees should be familiar with Governor Polis EO 2020 175 on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Recommended Actions (This may be the start of an ongoing list.)

1. Improve Trustee Communications and Outreach

- Board of Trustees to issue a statement on the situation and actions. (Now)
- Create automatic reply to BoT portal incoming messages acknowledging message receipt and thanks the sender for inputs.
- BoT should host a listening session open to faculty, staff, administration, and students to hear all voices during the Spring of 2021.
- Encourage Trustees to build relationships with University constituents—faculty, staff and students (e.g., encourage Trustees to attend classes, schedule 2-day BoT meetings that allows Trustees time for more touch points with constituents, encourage Trustees to attend WCU Student Government Association (SGA) meetings, etc.)
- Establish and educate Trustees, faculty, staff, and students on appropriate communications channels.

2. Discern and proclaim Western Core Values

- BoT should develop a vision statement and discern aspirational core values for Western at its Retreat usually held in July or sooner. A consultant may be needed to guide this endeavor. Advanced planning is needed to bring in inputs from the WCU community.
- Current Board Values stated in Strategic Plan are operational objectives: Quality, Achievement, Innovation, Fiscal Responsibility, Growth.

3. Improve Administrative Communications

- Develop a plan within one month, that will be approved by BoT, on improved presidential and campus-wide communications, to include goals, performance metrics, specific actions, and clear, transparent reporting approach. Initial discussions to be held with a committee of the BoT within two weeks.
- Recognizing our commitment to shared governance, student body should be included on all appropriate communications from President to faculty and staff.
- Remind WCU community of existing grievance procedures.

4. Strengthen Western's Commitment to Shared Governance and Policies

- Utilize the Concept: One Western, Many Voices
- All constituents must work harder on using this shared government concept
- BoT expects review of shared governance in annual performance review of President.
- Trustee Policy Manual (TPM) Sections 1.3, 1.9, 3.5, 5.4, and more will be revised to strengthen this concept by incorporating inputs from relevant constituents and especially governing Trustee email responses to Western community. Reconvene Ad Hoc Committee on Meeting Efficiencies, Bylaws and Policy.
- Review and update Employee Handbook for Professional Personnel and other key documents after receiving input from administration, faculty, staff, and students, where applicable.

ⁱ The Ad Hoc Committee for Action includes Trustees Szczurek (Chair), Ferchau, Miccoli, Olvera, Pribyl, and Shaddock with active participation by Jacquelyn N. Rich Fredericks, First Assistant Attorney General.