



WESTERN

COLORADO UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Meeting Minutes
December 7, 2023
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Zoom

I. Call to Order

Vice Chair Buckley called the meeting to order at 10:00am.

II. Attendance

Trustees: Trustee Blessman, Vice Chair Buckley, Student Trustee Engleman, Trustee Gutierrez, Trustee Hamner, Faculty Trustee Mason, Chair Pribyl, Trustee Szczurek, Trustee Todd, Trustee Vasquez, Trustee Wiens

Non-Trustees: Brad Baca (President), Craig Beebe (Administrative Leadership Council Chair), Kelsey Bennett (Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs), Ashley Carlson (Incoming Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs), Peter Fritz (Director of Student Transitions and Degree Completion Initiatives Colorado Department of Higher Education), Paul Giberson (Director of Retention and Completion), Patricia Hartshorn (Interim Director of Restorative Justice and Title IX Coordinator), Ian Higgins (VP Finance & Administration), Mike LaPlante (VP Advancement), Pat! Magee (Faculty Senate Representative), Steven Parker (VP Inclusivity), Gary Pierson (Dean of Students), Natalie Powell (Senior Assistant AG), Chad Robinson (Associate Vice President and Chief Information Officer), Caitlin Rovner (Executive Assistant to the President), Alex Sturde (IT), Leslie Taylor (VP Marketing & Enrollment), Miles VanHee (Athletic Director), Katie Walters (Executive Assistant to the Provost), Marita Whalen (Equal Opportunity Officer), James Young (IT), Jess Young (Provost).

III. Approval of the Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Trustee Todd and seconded by Trustee Hamner. The motion carried.

IV. Approval of Minutes for the September 28, 2023 and November 28, 2023 Board of Trustees Meetings

A motion to approve the minutes from September 28, 2023 and November 28, 2023 as presented was made by Trustee Szczurek and seconded by Trustee Wiens. The motion carried.

V. Review of Action Items from BOT Meeting of September 28, 2023

President Baca provided updates, and no questions or discussion followed.

VI. Oral Reports

A. President

President Baca reviewed upcoming legislative hearings including the Capital Development Committee hearing on December 14th. He provided updates on capital projects including phase one of the campus lighting project.

B. Board Chair

Vice Chair Buckley provided the Board Chair report. She expressed her thanks to Dean Pierson for the campus update item, and shared her thoughts on the Energy Forum. She asked VP Taylor to share information about the ongoing archeology project which is working to return Native American remains to their tribal communities.

C. Student Trustee

Student Trustee Engleman provided updates on SGA committee work. SGA has been engaged in discussions related to food service quality and availability, the *2023-2028 Strategic Plan*, and future library renovations. Other discussions have included the campus recreation fee, changes to the student handbook, and new clubs on campus. There have been two bill approvals: the Honors Student Advisory Board Travel Bill and the Model UN National Conference Bill, both of which provided funding for student travel.

D. Faculty Trustee

Faculty Trustee Mason spoke of the faculty perspective as the semester ends. There are many one-on-one student/faculty consultations to ensure students have successful outcomes. He recognized that the small class sizes at Western allow for this type of personalized support. Essential tasks are being completed to maintain accreditation, including program reviews. He noted the significant amount of faculty effort placed in providing information for the Campus Update agenda item. He also passed along gratitude for the improved communication from cabinet to faculty.

E. Faculty Senate Chair

Faculty Senate Chair Magee! outlined work that the taskforce on Personnel Policy Review has been completing, and that there would likely updates to the Trustee Policy Manual (TPM) proposed at a future meeting. Senate also passed an early tenure policy change recommendation. Over forty curriculum proposals are being considered. Faculty funding proposals are being reviewed.

F. Administrative Leadership Council (ALC) Chair

Chair Beebe reported that the ALC are working to ensure understanding of Western software and IT systems. A MultiFaith room is being opened on campus. An initiative named Swipe Out Hunger has been implemented, where students can donate meals from their meal plans and others can apply to receive them. Further assessment of the role and representation of the ALC is being undertaken, with the inclusion of classified staff (rather than just exempt staff) being explored. The professional development days over the winter break are much appreciated.

G. Attorney General/Legal Report

Natalie Powell provided summaries of the Federal Department of Education's Gainful Employment Rules and its November 7, 2023 Dear Colleague Letter.

H. Legislative Report

Kelli Kelty's report was merged with *IX. Discussion Topic D. Legislative Agenda Overview* and not given at this time.

I. Athletic Director

Director Van Hee reported that Western hosted a football playoff game in the Mountaineer Bowl. Construction of the Bowl was sufficiently completed to allow for us to host this game. It is anticipated that the full project will be completed by the end of March 2024. Winter sport programs have begun competitions.

VII. Public Comment

No public comments were provided.

VIII. Action Items

A. Personnel Action and Information Items

President Baca provided an overview of the Personnel Action items. Provost Young explained the tenure recommendation for incoming Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Ashley Carlson. A motion to approve the personnel information and action items as presented was made by Trustee Vasquez and seconded by Trustee Blessman. The motion carried.

B. Trustee Policy Manual (TPM): Posthumous Degrees

Provost Young provided an overview of the proposed addition to the *TPM*. This policy establishes the criteria and procedures under which Western may award posthumous degrees to deceased students to recognize and commemorate their academic achievement. A motion to approve the proposed Posthumous Degree policy to be added as section 3.1.3 to the *TPM* was made by Trustee Blessman and seconded by Trustee Hamner. The motion carried.

C. Colorado Re-Engaged (CORE) Initiative

Provost Young and Peter Fritz explained the CORE Initiative. This initiative would allow Western to award Associate of General Studies (AGS) degrees per Colorado House Bill 21-1330 (dependent on Higher Learning Commission approval). The Colorado Re-Engaged (CORE) initiative enables four-year institutions of higher education to award an earned AGS degree to eligible former students who have stopped-out from a baccalaureate program during the last 10 years. Western will apply for an implementation grant and seek authorization from the CDHE and the HLC. If approved, the program will launch in summer of 2024. A motion to approve Western awarding an Associate of General Studies degree per Colorado House Bill 21-1330 (dependent on HLC approval) was made by Trustee Hamner and seconded by Trustee Blessman. The motion carried.

Lunch Break

VIII. Action Items Continued *(These items were moved to before lunch.)*

D. 2023 Affirmative Action Plan and 2023-2025 Program for Affirmative Action Strategies

VP Parker introduced EEO Marita Whalen, who summarized Western's 2023 Affirmative Action Plan (AAP). As part of the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) requirements, Western must produce an annual AAP to demonstrate compliance with federal regulations. Whalen confirmed we are in compliance. She then outlined a Program for Affirmative Action Strategy composed of action-oriented strategies designed to meet Western's AAP goals. The Program aims to elevate Western beyond its compliance obligations to become a model for supporting and empowering diverse professionals in the context of a small, rural, public institution. Discussion and questions followed. A motion to approve Western's 2023 Affirmative Action Plan

and delegate to staff the authority to develop approaches and adapt strategies to meet the goals of the affirmative action program was made by Trustee Gutierrez and seconded by Trustee Wiens. The motion carried.

E. Multi-Unit Lease Agreement- Phase II *(This item was completed before Action Item VIII. D.)*

VP Higgins gave updates on current occupancy of existing rental units, and presented to the Board a lease amendment that would add eight units which are expected to be available in December 2023 and January 2024. Questions and discussion followed. A motion to approve this amendment to add additional units (bringing the total to 16) and authorize the use of institutional reserves to cover the necessary expenses of the lease, including the proposed rate reductions, was made by Trustee Blessman and seconded by Trustee Gutierrez. The motion carried.

IX. Discussion Topics

A. Cybersecurity Briefing

VP Higgins introduced AVP and CIO Robinson, who listed current risks and threats and reported on 2023 incidents at the national and state-wide level. He updated the Board on security improvements completed, and those still in progress. Discussion followed.

B. 2023-2028 Strategic Plan: Metrics and Targets

President Baca shared a draft of a one-page strategic plan, and reviewed updated strategic plan metrics, metric baselines, and five-year targets. He provided an overview of proposed data sources and peer-groups. Feedback from Trustees followed, and updates to metrics and five-year targets will be considered and presented at a future meeting.

C. Enrollment Report

VP Taylor provided a Fall 2024 admissions update. Applications for new students are down 1.5% YOY, but up just over 12% compared to Fall 2022. Admits are equal to Fall 2022, down 10% YOY. Applications from Colorado resident students are the highest in 4 years and admits are the second highest. Following the admissions update, Taylor presented data on what parents, guardians, and family members are looking for in the admissions and recruitment process.

IX. Discussion Topics Continued

A. Legislative Agenda Overview

Kelli Kely provided an overview of the 2024 session along with updates related to the Joint Budget Committee, changes in leadership in the Senate, and the Governor's budget proposal for higher education for FY2024-25. The total need for higher education governing boards to cover core minimum costs was discussed as well as Western's specific operating and capital construction requests.

B. Elevate Western Campaign Update

VP LaPlante reported over 1,000 alumni, parents, and friends have been engaged this semester. The annual Celebration of Giving event for scholarship donors and recipients was held in early November. The Elevate Western Campaign website has been launched at elevatewestern.org. VP LaPlante advised on changes to the Foundation Board of Directors, and provided an overview of the Campaign dashboard.

C. Draft 2024-25 Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule and Administrative Calendar

The Board reviewed the draft 2024-25 calendar and prefers the later June options for the Board Retreat. This calendar will be submitted for formal approval at the February 2024 meeting.

X. Written Reports

A: Department of Higher Education Budget Request

B: Campus Updates

XI. Set Next Meetings Agenda: February 8, 2024

XII. Other Business

No other business was raised.

XIII. Adjournment

Vice Chair Buckley adjourned the meeting at 3:58pm.