



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Meeting Minutes
June 26, 2025**

9:00am – 3:00pm

**Crested Butte Center for the Arts
King Community Room**

I. Call to Order

Vice Chair Buckley called the meeting to order at 9:07am.

II. Attendance

Trustees: Chair Pribyl (zoom), Vice Chair Buckley, Trustee Blessman, Trustee Carver, Trustee Gutierrez, Trustee Hamner, Faculty Trustee Mason, Student Trustee Rosenow, Trustee Todd, Trustee Vasquez, Trustee Wiens.

Non-Trustees: Matt Aronson (Faculty Senate Chair), Brad Baca (President), Kelsey Bennett (Associate Provost), Ashley Carlson (Associate Provost), Ella Fahrlander (Interim VP for Advancement), Laurel Fisher (ALC Representative), Kim Gailey (Director of Human Resources via zoom), Britt Gamble (Project Manager, Evergreen Solutions LLC via zoom), Ian Higgins (VP Finance & Administration), Joni Matzinger (EA to the President), Gary Pierson (Dean of Students), Natalie Powell (Senior Assistant AG), Caitlin Rovner (Business Operations and Event Manager via zoom), Leslie Taylor (VP Marketing & Enrollment Management), Miles VanHee (Director of Athletics), James Young (Campus Audio-Visual Manager), Jess Young (Provost).

III. Approval of the Agenda

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

IV. Approval of Minutes for the Board of Trustees meeting of May 9, 2025

Chair Pribyl proposed an amendment to change the wording “beautifully performed” to “The Chair performed *The Iowa Waltz* acapella on key.” Trustee Hamner proposed an amendment to add “unforgettable.”

A motion to approve the minutes of May 9, 2025 as amended was made by Trustee Gutierrez and seconded by Trustee Blessman. The motion carried.

V. Review of Action Items from BOT Meeting of May 9, 2025

President Baca provided updates to the presented action items.

VI. Executive Session

A motion to convene an executive session under Sections 24-6-402(3)(a)(II), 24-6-402(3)(a)(V) and 24-6-402(3)(b)(I) of the Colorado Revised Statutes to receive legal advice, and to consider employment negotiations and personnel matters on the following topic:

- a. President Baca's proposed renewal contract.

was made by Trustee Carver and seconded by Trustee Hamner. The motion carried.

As part of the motion, the Board invited its voting trustees, its counsel, and President Baca to join the executive session.

The Board returned to public session at 10:04am.

During the executive session, the board discussed the President's renewal contract for another three-year term with the assistance of legal advice from counsel.

VII. Action Items

A. Presidential Contract (*hand-carry*)

A motion to approve the renewal contract was made by Trustee Gutierrez and seconded by Trustee Hamner.

Vice Chair Buckley invited discussion on the proposed renewal contract. Trustee Todd, Trustee Hamner, Trustee Gutierrez, Trustee Wiens, Trustee Blessman, and Vice Chair Buckley expressed gratitude for President Baca's leadership. Chair Pribyl discussed details of the President's contract including start date and salary. President Baca responded by expressing gratitude to the board members and Western Colorado University faculty and staff members.

The motion to approve President Baca's contract renewal carried.

B. Updates to the *Trustee Policy Manual* related to Presidential Performance

President Baca presented revisions to the presidential evaluation criteria, emphasizing leadership, academic excellence and student success, financial stewardship, and enrollment. The Board discussed strategies for ongoing evaluation, the development of clear performance dashboards, and alignment with strategic goals. Trustees expressed support for the revised metrics and emphasized the importance of measurable outcomes and Board engagement.

The Board reviewed the WCU Strategic Plan document.

A motion to approve Appendix D to the Trustees Policy Manual and the corresponding updates to section 7.1 and 7.2 was made by Trustee Gutierrez and seconded by Chair Pribyl. The motion carried.

C. Personnel Action and Information Items

A motion to approve the personnel action items was made by Trustee Hamner and seconded by Trustee Vasquez. The motion carried.

A break was taken at 10:47am.

The meeting was reconvened at 10:55am.

VIII. Discussion topics

A. School of the Arts

Provost Young and Associate Provost Carlson presented an overview of the planning process that led to the proposed soft launch of a School of the Arts in July 2025. The new school will unite existing programs in Art, Graphic Design, Film, Theatre, and Music, with faculty actively exploring the development of additional offerings. They also outlined next steps planned for the 2025–26 academic year. The presentation prompted discussion among the Board, including questions about current alumni donor engagement, the potential for interdisciplinary certificate programs, and opportunities to connect with the broader artist and creative business community across the state. Trustees expressed strong support for the initiative and appreciation for the thoughtful and collaborative work accomplished to date.

B. Compensation Plan Overview

VP Higgins introduced Britt Gamble, Project Manager at Evergreen Solutions LLC, a third-party HR consulting firm, who worked with Kim Gailey (HR Director) to develop the comprehensive compensation plan. Gamble provided an update on the structure of the plan and how it's being implemented for staff and faculty.

Lunch break

VIII. Discussion topics (continued)

A. Undergraduate Enrollment Report

VP Taylor provided updates on current undergraduate enrollment numbers compared to previous years.

B. Elevate Western Campaign and Advancement Update

President Baca introduced Ella Fahrlander as the Interim VP of Advancement highlighting her previous experience at Western Colorado University and her broader professional background.

Interim VP Fahrlander provided an update on the *Elevate Western* campaign. She presented a comprehensive dashboard detailing key campaign metrics, including cash flow, dollars raised by fiscal year, donor counts, scholarship funding totals, and the cumulative amount raised across each of the six current campaign pillars.

With one year remaining in the campaign, Fahrlander emphasized the importance of donor stewardship as a central focus, underscoring efforts to express appreciation and maintain strong relationships with supporters.

C. Housing Project Update

VP Higgins provided an update on the employee housing construction process via contractor Fading West which consists of 36 units with a move-in goal of late summer 2026. He discussed the construction timeline and showed the various unit floor plans. A date for the Trustees to visit the Fading West factory will be determined.

D. Attorney General's Office Training (hand carry)

AAG Natalie Powell conducted the annual training for the board members per legal requirements. This consisted of reviewing the Colorado Sunshine Laws, Board fiduciary duties, and Board statutory protections.

IX. Oral Reports

A. President

President Baca provided an update on the Vice President for Advancement search, noting strong candidate interest ahead of the July 7th application deadline. Virtual semifinalist interviews are scheduled for mid-to-late July, with on-campus interviews in August. The goal is to have the position filled by the start of the academic year.

He also shared that WCU will not join the Mutual Defense compact at this time, affirming his commitment to protecting the university's academic freedom.

President Baca reported positive feedback from the WCU Foundation Board meeting held on June 20, 2025, and emphasized that fundraising remains a top priority.

He recently met with the city council to provide an update on WCU's Strategic Plan.

Upcoming work travel includes meetings in Denver and Alamosa with CU leadership, a presentation at the CCHE meeting, attending the RMAC Hall of Fame banquet to honor national champion and alum Lorie Moreno Roch, and a visit to the Colorado Space Coalition.

President Baca reported that Dr. Sharoni Little, Dean of the School of Business, applied and interviewed for the Leadership Denver program.

B. Board Chair

No formal report was presented by Chair Pribyl.

C. Student Trustee

Student Trustee Rosenow provided an update on her recent academic and service experiences. As part of her participation in the Geiman Fellows program, she traveled to Virginia to engage in nonprofit work alongside fellow peers and visited the U.S. Capitol as part of a course focused on understanding and defending democracy in America. During the visit, she attended a session of the House and observed the vote on the "Big Beautiful Bill." She also participated in an international study experience in London, where she toured Parliament, the Churchill War Rooms, and visited Oxford University. Other Western Colorado University students pursued study abroad opportunities in Nepal and Italy.

Trustee Rosenow also shared updates on recent campus initiatives, including the introduction of a new AI chatbot feature and ongoing discussions regarding environmental impact with Paul Giberson and Chad Robinson.

D. Faculty Trustee

Faculty Trustee Mason highlighted faculty summer research and work efforts to improve academic programs. He also noted the faculty's continued effort to meet prospective students throughout the summer.

E. Faculty Senate Chair

Faculty Senate Chair Aronson provided an update on recent faculty onboarding, noting the hiring of a new sociologist/criminologist who recently completed her dissertation. New guidance has been received regarding the hiring of tenured faculty. Additionally, a new Liberal Arts Core course will be offered, co-led by Steve Coughlin and Kelsey Bennett.

F. Administrative Leadership Council Chair

ALC Representative Laurel Fisher reported that elections for the AY 2025–26 ALC Leadership are underway. Results are scheduled to be announced the following week. Professional Development Day took place on June 3, 2025, and was attended by over 60 staff members. Participants engaged in six sessions facilitated by fellow Western staff members. Fisher expressed appreciation to the presenters involved in the event. The E3 Committee continued its efforts to enhance the employee experience on campus. At the time, the committee was in the process of updating the SharePoint site and preparing a transition document for incoming volunteers. Ian Higgins attended the ALC meeting to provide an update on the salary compensation study and to outline the next steps in the process.

G. Athletic Director

Director Van Hee provided various athletic updates. The recent House Settlement did not impact Division II institutions. For Division I, universities that opted in agreed to share up to 22.5% of athletic revenues with student-athletes, amounting to approximately \$20–22 million annually for major programs. Most institutions planned to allocate 75% of these funds to football, 15% to men's basketball, 5% to women's basketball, and 5% to the remaining sports, though each university retained discretion over how the revenue sharing pool was distributed. Wages were to be treated as self-employment income (1099) rather than traditional wages (W-2).

In the RMAC All-Sports Competition, Western finished 5th out of 15 member schools for the second consecutive year, earning the third-highest point total in program history.

In volleyball, Head Coach Sonia Morales-Jones signed 13 new recruits following her appointment on April 1.

Conference and Event Services (CES) had a strong season, hosting 33 events and camps with 6,815 participants. Football and wrestling accounted for nearly 60% of total camper volume. CES projected gross revenue of \$1,097,206 for 2025, an increase from the finalized 2024 total of \$859,408.

The Junior Mountaineers Camp (JMC), a state-licensed program, completed its fourth year and operated at full capacity with 90 campers ages 5 to 12. The camp featured a combination of activity and academic programming, with involvement from multiple campus departments. Gross revenue increased from \$85,341 in 2022 to projections exceeding \$200,000 for the years 2023 through 2025. Based on its continued success, the program was approved to expand into a year-round format.

beginning September 1. Planned offerings for the expanded program included JMC Day Camps, Hybrid Camps (three days of day camp with one or two overnight stays), Hut Trips (off-site, hut-based), and Expedition Camps (off-site, backcountry-based).

The Mountaineer Athletic Association (MAA) launched its 2025–26 membership drive in May. For the 2024–25 year, MAA reported over 60 corporate partners and 200 individual members, generating \$600,000 in revenue. The annual MAA Golf Tournament is scheduled for Friday, September 12, at The Club at Crested Butte.

Former student-athlete Lorie Moreno Roch was announced as an inductee into the RMAC Hall of Fame. She was a two-time national champion (1987 and 1988) in the 5,000m and 10,000m events and a five-time All-American in women's cross country and track.

H. Attorney General/Legal Report

AAG Natalie Powell presented on updates to lawsuits concerning federal grants and some recent bills passed by the Colorado General Assembly.

X. Public Comment

No public comments were made.

XII. Set Next Meeting's Agenda: October 9, 2025 (*Homecoming*)

XIII. Other Business

A. Logistics for Thursday evening and Friday

President Baca provided an overview of Thursday evening's dinner held at the Elevation Hotel, as well as Friday's seminar, which features presentations from guest speakers and facilitated discussions.

XIV. Adjournment

Vice Chair Buckley adjourned the meeting at 3:00pm.



**Meeting Minutes
June 27, 2025**

9:00am – 1:00pm

**Crested Butte Center for the Arts
King Community Room**

I. Call to Order

Vice Chair Buckley called the meeting to order at 9:04am.

II. Attendance

Trustees: Chair Pribyl (zoom), Vice Chair Buckley, Trustee Blessman, Trustee Carver, Trustee Gutierrez, Trustee Hamner, Faculty Trustee Mason, Trustee Todd, Trustee Vasquez (zoom), Trustee Wiens.

Excused: Student Trustee Rosenow

Non-Trustees: Matt Aronson (Faculty Senate Chair), Brad Baca (President), Ashley Carlson (AVP Academic Affairs via Zoom), Ella Fahrlander (Interim VP for Advancement), Ian Higgins (VP Finance & Administration), Kristin Hultquist (CEO, HCM Strategists), Joni Matzinger (EA to the President), Demi Michelau (President, Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education), Gary Pierson (Dean of Students), Natalie Powell (Senior Assistant AG), Leslie Taylor (VP Marketing & Enrollment Management), James Young (Campus Audio-Visual Manager), Jess Young (Provost).

III. Approval of the Agenda

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

IV. A Time for Learning and Reflection

President Baca introduced guest speakers, Kristin Hultquist (CEO, HCM Strategists) and Demi Michelau (President, Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education).

Led by Kristin Hultquist and Demi Michelau, the session explored current trends, challenges, and opportunities in higher education. The discussion identified key issues such as demographic shifts, enrollment patterns, financial constraints, and political dynamics, and included brainstorming of actionable strategies to address them. The session focused on how the Board could support the university in navigating these challenges, enhancing student success, forming industry partnerships, integrating technological advancements, and strengthening community relationships to build a resilient institution.

V. Passing of the Gavel

Chair Pribyl announced passing of the Gavel to Vice Chair Buckley. Vice Chair Buckley expressed gratitude for Chair Pribyl's leadership and congratulated him on being appointed commissioner to the Colorado State Land Board.

VI. Adjourn

Vice Chair Buckley adjourned the meeting at 12:19pm.

Lunch