



Meeting Minutes

September 19, 2024

10:00am – 3:00pm

University Center, Western Colorado University

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Pribyl at 10:00am.

II. Roll Call/Attendance

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

Non-Trustees: Matt Aronson (Faculty Senate Chair), Brad Baca (President), Kelsey Bennett (AVP Academic Affairs), Brad Burton (Professor of Geology), Ashley Carlson (AVP Academic Affairs), Nancy Chisholm (Elevate Campaign Chair), Simon Driver (Associate Director, Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning- zoom), Laurel Fisher (Administrative Leadership Council Representative), Paul Giberson (Administrative Leadership Council Chair), Sara Hathaway (Executive Director of Career Services), Ginny Hayes (Director of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning- zoom), Paula Hendrickson (Foundation Board of Directors Chair), Ian Higgins (VP Finance & Administration), Kelli Kely (Politicalworks- zoom), Mike La Plante (VP Advancement), Elizabeth Petrie (Professor of Geology), Gary Pierson (Dean of Students), Natalie Powell (Senior Assistant AG-zoom), Caitlin Rovner (EA to the President- via zoom), Anne Ryter (NES Department Chair), Alex Sturde (AV Technician), Leslie Taylor (VP Marketing & Enrollment Management), Miles VanHee (Athletic Director), Tiffanie Wick (Director of Library Services- zoom), 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 Szczurek and seconded by Trustee Buckley. The motion carried.

IV. Approval of Minutes for the Board of Trustees Meetings of June 27-28, 2024 and September 10, 2024

A motion to approve the minutes as presented for the Board of Trustees Meetings of June 27-28, 2024 was made by Trustee Buckley and seconded by Trustee Hamner. The motion carried. A motion to approve the minutes as presented for the Board of Trustees meeting of September 10, 2024 was made by Trustee Buckley and seconded by Trustee Szczurek. The motion carried.

V. Review of Action Items from prior BOT Meetings

President Baca provided updates to the presented action items.

VI. Oral Reports

A. President

President Baca reported on the start of the fall semester. The fall convocation was used to share accomplishments and momentum on campus. Employees have been challenged to make an impact on enrollment, with a current focus on spring retention and increasing transfer and first-time student enrollments. He provided updates on the Business Dean and the Dean of Equity and Inclusion search processes. He also listed some of the significant interactions over the summer between Western and state legislators, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education and Senator Bennett, and Senator Hickenlooper.

B. Board Chair

Chair Pribyl advised that rather than presenting a report, he would weigh in on topics as they arose in the agenda.

C. Student Trustee

Student Trustee Tanner provided updates from the first SGA business meeting of semester. A bill proposal for Lacrosse has been submitted, and discussion about a fraternity on campus has taken place. Active Citizenship is a theme that is being emphasized by the SGA, who hosted a debate watch party and are working with the Politics Club and League of Women voters group. Information about voting is also being shared with online students. Elections for five unfilled positions are being held. A Graduate Student representative is now serving on the SGA.

D. Faculty Trustee

Faculty Trustee Mason reported on faculty efforts to build coursework for the new GE program. While only 88 courses presently exist in the GE program, over 250 courses have been submitted for the new program. This includes a number of new course proposals and represents a huge effort on the part of the faculty over the first few weeks of the semester, in addition to the regular teaching/advising responsibilities of the faculty.

E. Faculty Senate Chair

The newly-elected faculty Senate chair (Dr. Matt Aronson, Professor of Sociology) expressed his gratitude for the dedicated service of Western's previous two Senate chairs, Dr. Brad Burton and Dr. Pat Magee!, who admirably displayed fair-minded and careful leadership during challenging times. Dr. Aronson then welcomed the Trustees back to campus, expressed enthusiasm for candid and thoughtful Senate discussions that have occurred so far this semester, and then emphasized that Western's new liberal arts core, the Watershed GE framework, will be among the Senate's most important orders of business this year. Based on Cabinet discussions about Western's role in promoting civil discourse, Dr. Aronson sent a written recommendation to Watershed's Director (Professor Steve Coughlin) encouraging their team to require "active listening" and "civil dialogue" as requirements in Headwaters and Delta courses. This Senate chair's suggestion was met with enthusiasm, and Professor Coughlin seemed confident that it will become part of those courses.

F. Administrative Leadership Council

ALC Chair Giberson provided the names and titles of those serving on the 2024-25 Leadership Team. Discussion is underway regarding a staff senate and the ALC continues to explore ideas and discuss purpose. The goal of the senate is to increase, encourage, and facilitate communication as a collective voice amongst staff, while the goal of the ALC is to support and facilitate strategic initiatives, organize training and professional development, and to encourage a sense of community.

G. Athletic Director

Athletic Director VanHee gave updates on the start of the fall semester. The Grand Opening of the Mountaineer Bowl at the Rady Family Sports Complex broke attendance records. At homecoming, we will celebrate the naming of Mojo Field. He shared an overview of the *Eksperience* app and platform, which Western is the first university to join.

H. Attorney General/Legal Report

Assistant Attorney General Natalie Powell updated the Board on the status of the Department of Education's 2024 Title IX Rules and Financial Value Transparency/Gainful Employment Rules.

I. Legislative Report- Special Session

Kelli Kelty provided an overview of the 2024 special session and its budgetary implications as well as a preview of the budget for the 2025 legislative session.

VII. Action Items

A. Personnel Information and Action Item

A motion to approve the personnel items as presented was made by Trustee Buckley and seconded by Trustee Gutierrez. The motion carried.

B. Roll Call Vote on Support for W.A. "Tex" Moncrief, Jr. Petroleum Geology Program per Rady Agreement

Dr. Elizabeth Petrie presented updates on geology student and faculty activities, research, engagement with an emphasis of those from the Petroleum Geology track.

A motion to take a roll call vote of the Board, President, Provost, and NES Department Chair to verbally affirm support for the Petroleum Geology program and the agreement was made by Trustee Buckley and seconded by Trustee Todd.

The Roll call vote was completed as follows:

Yea: Chair Pribyl, Vice Chair Buckley, Trustee Blessman, Trustee Gutierrez, Trustee Hamner, Trustee Szczurek, Trustee Todd, Trustee Wiens, President Baca, Provost Young, NES Department Chair Ryter.

Nay: None

Lunch with SGA Leadership

C. Updates to the Trustee Policy Manual (moved to after lunch)

President Baca and Natalie Powell provided an overview of the updates.

A motion that the Board adopt the presented interim policy updates to Sections 2.2, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.14 of the *TPM* as final policies, including the presented redline revisions in Sections 3.5 and 3.14, was made by Trustee Gutierrez and seconded by Trustee Hamner. Discussion followed.

A roll call vote on the motion was completed as follows:

Yea: Chair Pribyl, Vice Chair Buckley, Trustee Blessman, Trustee Gutierrez, Trustee Hamner, Trustee Szczurek, Trustee Todd, Trustee Wiens,

Nay: None

At the December 2024 meeting, more clarification on concealed carry and weapons storage requirements will be provided.

D. Campus Free Expression Policy (*moved to after lunch*)

An explanation on the context of review of these policies was given by President Baca.

A motion that the Board approve the updates to the Campus Free Expression Policy and make it part of the *Trustees Policy Manual* as Section 2.3. was made by Trustee Buckley and seconded by Trustee Todd. The motion carried.

VIII. Discussion Topics

A. Career Services Presentation

The Board heard a presentation from Executive Director of Career Services, Sara Hathaway, on the alignment of the Office of Career Services with Goal 3 of the strategic plan. The discussion included a description of events, trainings, and data acquisition associated with improving students' internship and career opportunities.

B. Board of Trustee Job Description and Individual Action Plans

President Baca presented a draft Trustee Job Description. Discussion followed. He also outlined the development of individual Trustee action plans and indicated that staff will identify and communicate next steps.

C. Student Enrollment Report

Vice President of Marketing and Enrollment Leslie Taylor provided an enrollment update detailing current data and goals for the upcoming academic year. According to the report, Western experienced a slight decrease of 48 students in degree seeking undergraduates. The decrease was buffered by an impressive 19% increase in non-resident first-year students, bringing the University's overall share of non-resident students to 31%.

Taylor also highlighted Western's efforts to engage prospective students and continue focusing on retention of students who are already enrolled as well as growth in the spring semester, which has seen a 50% increase in total applications.

A work session centered on enrollment strategies and planning will be scheduled.

D. Elevate Western Campaign and Advancement Updates

VP LaPlante shared news of a record-breaking fundraising year, having raised over \$12M in FY24 including a \$6.6M commitment from Dave Geiman which included the largest estate gift ever received by Western. Through the generosity of our donors, the Foundation was able to distribute \$400,000 more in scholarship awards and in total distributed nearly \$2M more to the university (\$4.7M – \$6.6M) in FY24. VP LaPlante also introduced the new chair of the Foundation Board, Paula Hendrickson, who will be serving in that position for two years.

VP LaPlante and Elevate Western Campaign chair Nancy Chisholm shared news that, bolstered by the great fundraising year and the Mountaineer Bowl completion, the campaign has raised \$85M to date and will focus the final two years of the campaign on the Foster Academic Excellence and Engineering Colorado's Future pillars, specifically raising funds for new academic curriculum of biomedical and aerospace engineering and the nursing program, and will push to complete the funding needed to launch the Gunnison Valley Promise.

E. Long Term Housing Update

VP Finance and Administration Higgins provided updates on the project: acquisition of land, requests for proposals, state approval, and bond issuance.

IX. Written Reports

A. Financial and Capital Construction Report

B. Campus Updates

X. Set Next Meeting Agenda: December 5, 2024

XI. Other Business

No other business was raised.

XII. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

XIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Pribyl at 3:44pm.