Western Michigan University
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Proposed Meeting Minutes

September 17, 2021

The Western Michigan University Board of Trustees (BOT) Formal Session was called to order by Chair Chen-Zhang at 1:12PM on Friday, September 17, 2021. The meeting was conducted, amidst the continued global pandemic, in a mix modality with participants both attending in person at the College of Aviation, Battle Creek, MI or engaging through Zoom, a virtual platform. The engagement was streamed live through the BOT website. Prior marketing encouraged the public to engage and those interested in providing comment were asked to notify Board Secretary Schuemann by 5:00PM, Thursday, September 16th. Presiding in person were Chair Chen-Zhang, and Trustees Edgerton, Rinvelt and Turfe. Trustee Penn participated through Zoom. Both Vice Chair Johnston and Trustee Trevan provided prior notice they were unable to attend.

A motion to accept September 17, 2021 BOT agenda was made by Trustee Edgerton, with a second from Trustee Rinvelt. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion to accept the minutes as exhibited from the June 24, 2021 BOT Meeting was made by Trustee Turfe, with a second by Trustee Rinvelt. The motion passed unanimously.

Remarks were provided by Chair Chen-Zhang – Attachment A, followed by remarks from President Montgomery – Attachment B.

Faculty Senate President M. Kritzman, Western Student Association (WSA) President A. Morris, and Graduate Student Association (GSA) Interim President A. Hiremath provided comments regarding their respective areas and their ongoing activities and initiatives relating to shared governance, promoting student involvement, and academic enrichment. See Attachment C for remarks by Faculty Senate President M. Kritzman.

College of Aviation Dean D. Powell engaged the Board in presentation entitled Navigating Excellence in Aviation.

There was no indicated public interest in providing commentary regarding any Action Items.

As Action Items, Vice President for Business and Finance J. Van Der Kley presented the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Labor Agreement for approval. A motion to accept the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Labor Agreement was made by Trustee Edgerton with a second by Trustee Rinvelt. The motion passed unanimously.

Provost J. Bott next recommended the Professional Instructors Organization Labor Agreement for approval. A motion to accept the Professional Instructors Organization Labor Agreement was made by Trustee Edgerton and seconded by Trustee Turfe. The motion passed unanimously.
Provost J. Bott continued by presenting the Western Michigan University American Association of University Professors Collective Bargaining Agreement. **A motion to accept the Western Michigan University American Association of University Professors Collective Bargaining Agreement** was made by Trustee Penn, with a second by Trustee Rinvelt, and passed unanimously.

The next agenda item regarded awarding an Honorary Degree for Kenneth V. Miller and was recommended by President Montgomery. **A motion to accept awarding an Honorary Degree for Kenneth V. Miller** was made by Trustee Edgerton, with a second by Trustee Rinvelt, and passed unanimously.

Provost J. Bott then advocated for renaming the University College to Merze Tate College. **A motion to accept renaming the University College to Merze Tate College** was made by Trustee Turfe, with a second by Trustee Penn. The motion passed unanimously.

The next agenda item involved the Five-Year State Capital Outlay Plan and was recommended by Vice President for Business and Finance J. Van Der Kley. **A motion to accept the Five-Year State Capital Outlay Plan** was made by Trustee Edgerton, with a second by Trustee Penn, and passed unanimously.

Vice President for Business and Finance J. Van Der Kley next proposed the State Capital Outlay Plan Priority List. **A motion to accept the State Capital Outlay Plan Priority List** was made by Trustee Rinvelt with a second by Trustee Edgerton. The motion passed unanimously.

The next agenda item regarded the Sale of Grand Rapids Beltline Property and was recommended by Vice President for Business and Finance J. Van Der Kley. **A motion to accept the Sale of Grand Rapids Beltline Property** was made by Trustee Rinvelt, with a second by Trustee Edgerton, and passed unanimously.

**A motion to approve the Consent Items** was made by Trustee Rinvelt, with a second from Trustee Penn. The BOT unanimously approved the following Consent Items as exhibited: Curriculum Proposals, Personnel Report, Annuity and Life Income Funds Performance Report, Operating Cash Investment Performance Report, and One Day Liquor License Applications (November 3, 2021 and November 5, 2021).

During General Public Comments B. Stanley and J. Schmidtke addressed the Board.

The BOT meeting ended at 2:24PM following **a motion to adjourn** by Trustee Penn, with a second from Trustee Rinvelt, and unanimous approval.

Respectfully submitted,

[Kahler B. Schuemann, Secretary to the Board of Trustees, Western Michigan University]
Good Morning! It is my pleasure to welcome everyone to our very special September board meeting at the beautiful Western Michigan University College of Aviation. I’m pleased that we can be here today to conduct our hybrid meeting and then later today, to celebrate the opening of the Aviation Education Center.

All of Western’s faculty and staff are committed to providing students with an excellent education that prepares them for future success, and the College of Aviation is no different. The team here is helping the 1,200 students in this college to gain the skills that they’ll need for careers as pilots, as technical operations experts, in aviation management and in related areas.

We will all learn more about this college during today’s meeting in a presentation by Dean David Powell, a leader who has been with Western since 2003 and has served as the College of Aviation dean since 2008. Dean Powell elevated an already strong program by connecting its academics with the needs of the aviation industry and making its students highly sought after by employers. I understand that Dean Powell has announced that he will be retiring from his leadership role, and I want to thank him for his many contributions to his students, to the University and to the aviation industry.

We have a number of items for board consideration during today’s meeting. Vice President Van Der Kley will be quite busy today as she will be at the microphone to share the University’s capital outlay priority list and the five-year capital outlay plan with the board. She will also present the IATSE labor agreement for the board’s consideration and a proposal regarding the sale of the Grand Rapids Beltline property.

Provost Jennifer Bott will bring forward a recommendation to name the new University College in honor of a very distinguished alumna, Dr. Merze (sounds like MURZ) Tate. Dr. Tate was the first African American to receive a bachelor’s degree from Western in 1927. She was an impressive woman who was smart, resilient and determined to succeed—a true Bronco! I am looking forward to hearing more about Dr. Tate and about this recommendation from Provost Bott today.

President Montgomery will be bringing forward an honorary degree nomination for Trustee Emeritus Kenneth V. Miller. Mr. Miller served this body for two terms. He’s made numerous contributions to the community and I’m pleased to entertain his nomination in recognition of his considerable service to the community.

In addition to the action items, we also have several consent items on the agenda, including those related to curriculum, personnel and several fund performance reports.
Thank you, Chair Chen Zhang.

We’re now two and a half weeks into the fall semester and it’s great to feel the energy that a new semester and the return of our students bring to campus. There’s also the ongoing progress at the new Student Center, which is now fully enclosed, and I also see and hear the renovation work at Dunbar Hall. It’s a lot of welcome activity and it is both refreshing and also very familiar.

Lynn, I echo your appreciation for Dean Powell and the role that he has played in advancing the College of Aviation. During his tenure as dean, the college’s enrollment has increased, partnerships with industry leaders have been forged that support student success and most noticeably, he’s provided the vision for the development of the building that we are dedicating today.

I wish him the best in retirement and look forward to hearing his presentation today and to celebrating the Aviation Education Center’s dedication later this afternoon.

During that dedication we’ll hear from a number of representatives from partner organizations that played a role helping us move forward through the process of planning and developing this beautiful facility that was built with students in mind.

Partnerships are critical to us in higher education, and specifically at Western as we strive to make connections that enable us to continue building on the promise of student success and that contribute to stronger communities.

The value of those partnerships was also reflected earlier this week when we celebrated the opening of the new Ascension Borgess Cancer Care Center at the new section of Business Technology and Research Park—BTR Park North.

This facility is the first building to be completed in BTR Park North, and this event offered us the chance to pause and celebrate the value of collaborations between higher education, business, local government and other entities in improving residents’ quality of life.

We had good news earlier this week when Provost Bott shared word from the Higher Learning Commission that it has reaffirmed Western’s accreditation.
This announcement comes following an extensive, decade-long process that culminated with a site review and report and resulted in a vote by the HLC to reaffirm Western’s full accreditation status through 2031.

I’d like to thank the Provost for her leadership, the accreditation team for keeping us on task and the many faculty, staff and students who served on criterion teams and the HLC Peer corps reviewers who contributed to this massive effort.

Provost Bott is also taking the lead in a University-wide strategic planning effort that will soon be getting underway. This planning is a thoughtful and important effort that will include numerous individuals who will look at how we can build on our existing strengths to create an even stronger University for the future. It is vital work that is crucial to maintaining a strong organization.

Later in this meeting I will be asking this board to accept my nomination of Trustee Emeritus Kenneth V. Miller for an honorary degree. Ken has been a strong supporter of our University and our community for many years. He’s a business owner, a volunteer, a philanthropist and very deserving of this honor.
Good afternoon Chair Chen-Zhang, members of the Board, President Montgomery, colleagues and guests. On behalf of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate, thank-you for the opportunity to address the board and for allowing one of your designated partners in shared governance to update you on our activities.

The Faculty Senate Executive Board bid farewell and sent congratulations to Director Yvonne Ford upon her retirement from the University, and the Board also recently accepted the resignation of Director William Rantz. Please join me in welcoming newly elected Executive Board Director Scott Slawinski from the College of Arts and Sciences.

The administration has approved two Memorandum of Action; MOA- 21/02: Creation of Transfer Minor Policy, which I spoke of at the June meeting, and MOA-21/03: Revision of Dean’s List Honors which will allow undergraduate students to be named retroactively to the Dean’s List, once incomplete grades for that semester have been posted.

September is our organizational month when all Councils/Committees convene for the first time and this year they convene, both virtually and in person. Charges for each have been approved and delivered. Both members and leaders are ready and willing to tackle this year’s projects.

We welcome the opportunity to participate, with our colleagues, in the October 2 graduation celebration where we will congratulate in excess of 1800 new WMU Alumni and recent graduates. The Faculty Senate’s first meeting of the year will be held Thursday, October 7 at 5 p.m. in 208 Bernhard as well as virtually; the inaugural Fallen Bronco ceremony will be Friday, October 8 at 3 p.m. at the international flag poles and finally, rounding out October’s events, the WMU Essential Studies launch celebration and first year anniversary will occur on Thursday, October 14 at 4:30 PM. More event details are forthcoming. Until then, the Faculty Senate would like to thank all faculty, staff, students, and University senior leadership that contributed to the Higher Learning Commission reaffirmation. We are very proud that the WMU Essential Studies program, an initiative of the Faculty Senate, was noted as a significant strength in the Higher Learning Commission reaffirmation process and report. The successful development and launch of WMU Essential Studies were due to the collaboration and leadership of all our partners in shared governance (Board of Trustees, Western Student Association, and Graduate Student Association). Over 400 faculty, staff, students, and senior leadership contributed to the development of the program and hundreds more are actively teaching courses in it. We are proud of and grateful to all who have and continue to make this program an overwhelming success.
It is most fitting that today we meet on the Aviation campus and celebrate the facility that will house the programs that will create the skies best future pilots. This is an example of over a decade of planning and work that resulted in an outcome that emphasizes the quality education that Western Michigan University offers. Time and talent from around the campus and beyond assisted in making this space a reality.

We are at the point in our pandemic journey where we have the end in sight, but fog is obstructing our view. I believe our pilot friends would say we have “reduced visibility” and our “reduced visibility” could lead to a “bumpy” landing. In our community some are adjusting to returning to in-person work, and many still wonder about what may happen this year with both the Delta and Lambda Covid variants. What we do know is that we are competing for a smaller pool of college ready students across the state, and that not attending college is a reality for more high school graduates. In order to remain competitive in the college market, we must continue to adjust. Academic Affairs, under the Provost’s leadership, began an interdisciplinary proposal review process earlier in 2021. We have had some success from the first round of proposals. After an informative conversation with a colleague last evening, I am reminded that now, more than ever, it is the time to look around, invite colleagues to the table to discuss curriculum and collaboration opportunities. It is time to think less about me, and more about what serves WMU students the best. It is time to tear down silos, not build new ones; and cross the aisle to create new opportunities and access for our students. If the crew of Apollo 13 and all those at Mission Control had not thrown the flight plan out the window and started over all those years ago, that space ship never would have safely landed on planet earth.

Maybe it is time for us to focus on Western’s post-pandemic landing and what it will look like? Thank-you, Chair Chen-Zhang for allowing me to address the board. I will answer any questions that you may have.