Proposed Meeting Minutes

April 22, 2021

The Western Michigan University Board of Trustees (BOT) Formal Session was called to order by Vice Chair Chen-Zhang at 11:15AM on April 22, 2021. The meeting was conducted, amidst the continued global pandemic, in an online modality with participants 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 5PM Wednesday, April 21st. Presiding were Chair Chen-Zhang, Vice Chair Johnston and Trustees Edgerton, Kitchens, Penn, Rinvelt, Trevan, and Turfe.

A motion to accept April 22, 2021 BOT agenda was made by Trustee Edgerton, with a second from Trustee Penn. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion to accept the minutes as exhibited from the March 18, 2021 BOT Meeting was made by Trustee Kitchens, with a second by Trustee Edgerton. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Faculty Senate President M. Kritzman, Western Student Association (WSA) President T. West, and Graduate Student Association (GSA) President C. Morris 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.

President Montgomery introduced L. Burns, N. Hammond, S. Soria Ramirez, and N. Tews (four WMU seniors) who briefed the Board on their academic journey and shared aspirations as future leaders within their fields.

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

As Action Items, Provost Bott presented the Undergraduate Tuition Simplification Strategy for approval. A motion to accept the Undergraduate Tuition Simplification Strategy was made by Trustee Penn with a second by Trustee Kitchens. The motion passed unanimously.

The next agenda item regarded WMUK-FM COVID-19 Relief Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Loan and was recommended by Provost Bott. A motion to accept a WMUK-FM COVID-19 Relief Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Loan was made by Trustee Edgerton, with a second by Trustee Penn, and passed unanimously.
As Action Items, the Board considered the Consent Items. A motion to approve the Consent Item was made by Trustee Kitchens, with a second from Trustee Edgerton. The BOT unanimously approved the following Consent Items as exhibited: Curriculum Proposals and the Personnel Report.

There was no indicated public interest in providing commentary during General Public Comments.

The BOT meeting ended at 12:33PM following a motion to adjourn by Trustee Kitchens, with a second from Trustee Edgerton, 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 April board meeting. It’s good to see everyone today on this final meeting of the spring semester, with spring in the air and graduation right around the corner.

I have been looking forward to today’s meeting. In addition to attending to the action items and hearing from our shared governance partners, we will also meet some inspiring students who will become Western Michigan University graduates in just nine days.

I think that I can speak for our entire board when I say that I am grateful for any opportunity to meet our students and to hear how their experiences at Western have enabled them to pursue their dreams and set them on the road to success. Their stories remind us of why we are all committed to doing our best to support and guide this institution into the future.

And as part of that work to look ahead, the board had the opportunity to participate in the University’s Higher Learning Commission reaccreditation review process recently. As we have noted, this is an important effort to ensure that the University maintains its high academic standards and continues to strive for improvements. We were pleased to be part of it.

I would like to thank the University’s accreditation team, Andrew Holmes, Adriana Cardoso Reyes and Amanda Geer for their leadership, and we look forward to hearing the results of the review in the coming weeks.

Board’s Action Items:

Among the action items that will be brought to the board today, we’ll be hearing from Provost Bott on a newly simplified undergraduate tuition structure. This effort represents important work to realign our structure in a manner that is similar to our peer institutions in the state. This change should also make it easier for our students and families to understand. It will also enable multi-year financial aid strategies. Thank you, Provost, for bringing this to us today.

The Provost will also provide information regarding a Paycheck Protection Program loan to the WMUK-FM radio station. With challenges in fundraising over the course of the pandemic, the station is seeking this support to continue serving the community.
We also have two consent topics on today’s agenda. One is the personnel report and the other includes a number of curriculum proposals.

The proposals that are coming before us have each undergone a rigorous process of review and consideration through the appropriate academic channels as outlined by the Faculty Senate. This effort involves steps to ensure that appropriate resources are available to support the changes, and includes the board’s involvement as part of its fiduciary responsibilities.

We appreciate the diligence required by all of the individuals and bodies that are part of this process. They all contribute to strengthening our academic offerings, and point to the health and vibrancy of our University.

And finally, Ms. Taylor West, Western Student Association President. I’d like to note that today is Ms. West’s final appearance before our board as her term of service with the WSA is coming to a close. I would like to take this time to thank Taylor for her dedication to the student body and for her commitment to representing their voice throughout the past year.
Today is the 51st Earth Day. At Western, we have long been active in environmental protection, conservation and sustainability, and we are actively addressing climate change. As one of the first higher education institutions to develop an action plan and commit to carbon neutrality, we are not resting on our laurels.

Our University has committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2065; and now, Provost Bott has charged our Carbon Neutrality Committee with looking at whether it is feasible to achieve that goal by 2050, and to cut our carbon footprint in half by 2030. The Carbon Neutrality Committee comprises faculty, staff and students who are dedicated to reviewing our progress, examining scientific data and making sound recommendations for our institution’s future. I applaud their work and look forward to reviewing their reports.

As Chair Chen-Zhang noted, we are approaching spring commencement. It's a time that everyone at the University works toward, and we all pause together to celebrate it. This semester we’ll congratulate 2,433 graduates and welcome them to the Western Michigan University alumni family. The virtual ceremonies for all of the colleges will be held on May 1, and I’d like to invite the entire University community to watch. Simply visit the commencement website and you’ll find links to each college’s ceremony and the time that it will go live. (NOTE: If you are asked, the website is w mich.edu/commencement).

In addition to the virtual commencement exercises, each of the colleges will be celebrating their graduates during small, outdoor, socially distanced activities. My thanks to those who have put their creativity to use in coming up with ways to give our graduates a chance to don their caps and gowns and enjoy safe and joyous celebrations.

I’m looking forward to hearing from four members of the Class of 2021 who will be joining us today. They will be sharing their stories about what Western has meant to them and how we have prepared them for the future, and I know that you’ll be as impressed as I am about what they have accomplished during their time on campus.

In addition to congratulating those who are graduating, I’d also like to recognize several of our employees who recently earned awards from the Administrative Professional Association. These individuals were recognized during the APA’s annual spring awards program, and I join with the association in congratulating them and thanking them for their contributions to Western.
The Outstanding New Professional Award was presented to Nathan Nguyen, director of LGBT Student Services. This award is given to a staff member who has worked at Western for five or fewer years and who provides outstanding service to their department or division, goes above and beyond expectations and shows initiative and creativity.

The Outstanding Professional Award was presented to Laura Ciccantell, director of teacher and administrator certification in the College of Education and Human Development. This award is presented to an individual who has at least five years of service and who is not only exceptional at their job, but who also is dedicated to their profession and to the University.

The third award that presented was the Tony Griffin Service Award. This honor was presented to William McQuitty, an institutional research analyst. It is named in memory of past APA president and WMUK radio news director Tony Griffin. It’s given to a member of the APA who has provided outstanding service to the organization.

Congratulations to all of these deserving recipients.

We also recently celebrated the spring research convocation. During that event Vice President Kinzy named three new Presidential Innovation Professors. This is an award that is presented to recognize outstanding faculty members who demonstrate creativity in research and entrepreneurial approaches to their disciplines.

The three new recipients are Dr. Massood Atashbar (Uh-TASH-bar), Dr. Wendy Beane and Dr. Sue Ellen Christian.

Dr. Atashbar is a professor of electrical and computer engineering. He’ll be using his award to develop a flexible and portable microplasma discharge platform to sterilize wounds, incisions and surgical equipment. This tool will not only help prevent infection, but Dr. Atashbar will include graduate, undergraduate, and high school students in the research, giving them valuable experience and opportunities to explore science.

Dr. Beane, associate professor of biological sciences, works in quantum biology—the study of interactions between particles in living organisms that are smaller than atoms. It’s a field with enormous promise, and one that would greatly benefit from collaborations with investigators from fields like biology, chemistry, physics and engineering. Dr. Beane’s project will include an interdisciplinary training program that will bring trainees from other scientific disciplines to Western to gain experience in quantum biology research and give Western students the chance to get cross-disciplinary training in other quantum biology labs.
Dr. Christian is developing an interactive museum exhibit focused on educating the public about media and news literacy. The 10-station interactive exhibit will be on display at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum next year, and all Kalamazoo Public School middle school social studies students will tour it during that time.

It may later go on display at other Michigan museums. The exhibit will also serve as a prototype for a National Endowment for the Humanities Digital Projects for the Public grant request for production of a traveling national exhibit.

Each of these projects exemplifies the kinds of vital contributions that Western Michigan University faculty—as well as their peers across higher education—contribute to society. I congratulate the new innovation professors and look forward to hearing more from them in the future.

Before I turn the microphone back to the chair, I would like to share my thanks to outgoing Western Student Association President Taylor West for her leadership and dedication to the organization over the past year. You’ve been a strong voice for your peers during a very difficult year, and I wish you the best in the future.

And with that, I’ll conclude my comments today.
Good morning Chair Chen-Zhang, members of the Board, President Montgomery, campus colleagues and guests. On behalf of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate, thank you for this opportunity to address the board and allowing one of your designated partners in shared governance to update you on our activities.

The WMU administration has approved and signed four recommended Memoranda of Action:

- MOA-20/04: Establishment of WMU Essential Studies Data Governance Policy
- MOA-20/07: Revision of the Organizational Changes of Academic Units
- MOA-20/08: Revision of University Admission Criteria for Doctoral Programs
- MOA-21/01: Revision to Language to Allow Co-Chairs for Thesis, Specialist, and Dissertation Committees

Our International Education Council is discussing how to introduce and market the benefits of WMU's international partnerships to more departments and programs.

The Senate would like to thank long-term International Education leader Dr. James Butterfield as he steps down from IEC to move into phased retirement.

The Executive Board is finalizing recommendations for the Posthumous Degree Policy which will be shared with Dr. Montgomery in the near future. At our (full) April Senate meeting we conducted elections for Council, Committee and at-large Senate vacancies and those elected will take office May 1st. We are close to finalizing our summer board schedule and working on our end of the year report. We will close out a very productive year, on May 13th, at our final Faculty Senate meeting.

This past Sunday afternoon, I had the honor of speaking at the 30-year Zoom reunion of the 1991 WMU orientation leaders. It was a trip down memory lane and was refreshing to see everyone in their WMU gear, the displays of Bronco swag during the Bronco Fight Song, the Alma Mater and the introductions. It was also a reminder of the impact of a WMU degree, the WMU co-curricular experience and the learning experiences our University provides future leaders. A college campus is truly a living-learning laboratory. As I reflect on the students that I, and others, have worked with over the years, I see tremendous talent and more importantly, unending impact on the greater society. Medical professionals and educators in all areas and at all levels, lawyers, political and business leaders and entrepreneurs, clergy, pilots, aviation management and military officials at all levels and nationally known actors, musicians and professional athletes are among the WMU alumni making a daily impact.
It is truly humbling to be part of an institute of higher education with such reach and with an alumni base that has such pride in its alma mater. What struck me about Sunday's event was the discussion surrounding the marketing slogan of the early 1990's, "Western Michigan University... where You Belong". Thirty years later, this group of students affirmed that attending Western Michigan University was the best decision they ever made. To me this is part of Western Michigan University's competitive greatness, so well-known as part of our University's history.

As we close in on the end of another academic year that will go down in the history books as challenging and unique, let me encourage each of us to find some time to reflect on the past year, both the good and the bad. Let each of us look for our competitive greatness.

As you may know, I am a John Wooden junkie and have every book he has ever written or co-authored. Allow me to share an excerpt of Building Block 15, Competitive Greatness from the late (and great) John Wooden book, *Coach Wooden’s Pyramid of Success Playbook*...

If we demonstrate all the preceding building block qualities, we have the potential for success, but without competitive greatness, we won't be the best we can be. Competitive greatness is the pinnacle of the Pyramid. With competitive greatness, we can deliver our best when our best is needed, and at the same time, we can make those around us better, too. A person with this quality loves a challenge – the tougher the better.

Having competitive greatness does not always mean that we are the one who scores the most points or hits the winning shot. Lewis Alcindor (Kareem Abul-Jabbar) could have set every college scoring record in the book, but he didn't. He could see the big picture and always reigned in this own play for the sake of elevating the play of his teammates. As a result, he was rewarded with a national championship every year he played (for UCLA).

We don't have to be superstars to reach competitive greatness. All we have to do is learn to rise to every occasion, give our best effort and make those around us better as we do it.

The Faculty Senate believes in competitive greatness for both the University and the academic enterprises it represents. We strive to do our best work for the University, the students and faculty each and every day. I encourage everyone on this call to reflect on the concept of competitive greatness, what it means to us personally, what is means to our organization and what is means to the legacy our students. Because in the end, the students and the future are the reason we do what do each and every day.

Thank-you for allowing me to address the board this morning.