Proposed Meeting Minutes

November 3, 2022

The Western Michigan University Board of Trustees (BOT) Meeting Formal Session was called to order by Chair Chen-Zhang at 11:04 AM on Thursday, November 3, 2022. The meeting was conducted in a mixed modality with participants both attending in person at the Bernhard Center, North Ballroom 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 5PM, Wednesday, November 2nd. Presiding in person were Chair Chen-Zhang, along with Trustees Johnston, Penn, Rinvelt, and Turfe. Vice Chair Edgerton and Trustee Trevan participated made prior arrangements to be absent.

A motion to accept the November 3, 2022 BOT agenda was made by Trustee Rinvelt with a second by Trustee Penn. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion to accept the minutes as exhibited from the September 15, 2022 Meeting was made by Trustee Johnston, 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 Summy, Western Student Association (WSA) President Sun, and Graduate Student Association (GSA) President Asif provided comments regarding their respective areas and their ongoing activities and initiatives relating to shared governance, promoting student involvement, and academic enrichment.

President Montgomery introduced Director of Multicultural Affairs for Students M. Holman who presented Bronco Connect: Discovering Success.

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

As Action Items, VP for Business and Finance J. Van Der Kley presented on the Sale of Kalamazoo Downtown Property. A motion to accept the Sale of Kalamazoo Downtown Property was made by Trustee Rinvelt with a second by Trustee Penn. The motion passed unanimously.

The next agenda item the Western Michigan University External Audit and was recommended by Trustee Rinvelt. A motion to accept the Western Michigan University External Audit was made by Trustee Johnston, with a second by Trustee Penn, and passed unanimously.

VP for Student Affairs D. Anderson then presented Changes to the Student Code of Conduct. A motion to accept the Changes to the Student Code of Conduct was made by Trustee Rinvelt, with a second by Trustee Johnston and passed unanimously.
A motion to approve the Consent Items was made by Trustee Penn, with a second from Trustee Johnston. The BOT unanimously approved the following Consent Items as exhibited:
Personnel Report; Revised Bylaws for the Paper Technology Foundation; Revised Western Michigan University Board of Trustees Meeting Dates for 2023; Annuity and Life Income Funds Performance Report; and Operating Cash Investment Performance Report

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

The BOT meeting ended at 12:15PM following a motion to adjourn by Trustee Rinvelt, with a second from Trustee Penn, and unanimous approval.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]

Kahler Schuemann, Ph.D.,
Secretary to the Board of Trustees
Western Michigan University
Good morning! It’s wonderful to be together again for our November Board of Trustees meeting. To those joining us in the Bernhard Center and to those viewing remotely, we appreciate you for taking time out of your day for today’s meeting.

It’s hard to believe that it’s already November. Thanksgiving will be upon us before we know it. And students and faculty—who just completed mid-term exams it seems—will be gearing up for finals. The semester is flying by. But we are energized by the learning and the activity that continues to unfold on campus.

As I mentioned, Thanksgiving isn’t far off. But I want to highlight another national observance, which will be here much sooner. It’s one all of us at Western should take pride in celebrating. Tomorrow will kick off the University’s commemoration of first-generation college students, which is a nationally recognized day taking place on Nov. 8 this year. On campus, we will be starting the celebration a little earlier than that. From Nov. 4 through Nov. 8, Heritage Hall will be the scene of an exhibition featuring the art and stories of WMU first-generation students.

We have a long history at Western of welcoming with open arms students who are the first in their family to attend college. We are proud that this describes many of our students.

Over the years, I’ve heard countless stories of first-gen students earning a degree here and how that experience changed not only their lives, but those who followed in their footsteps.

A member of our team at Zhang Financial happens to be a first-generation student at Western. A great asset to our firm, he has worked for us for more than two years already while attending school and will be graduating next summer. He is poised to take his certified financial planner exam soon and has a very bright future ahead of him.

So, we are proud of our students and alumni and proud to join in this national recognition. I hope you can visit Heritage Hall tomorrow or early next week as part of the celebration. Thank you.

We will be considering several items for action during today’s meeting. The first up for consideration is the proposed sale of a property in downtown Kalamazoo. Vice President Van Der Kley will present on this requested action.

The next item for board action will be brought to the floor by Trustee Rinvelt—the results of the University’s external audit, which was conducted by Plante Moran.
Then Dr. Diane Anderson, vice president for student affairs, will bring a recommendation for changes to our student code of conduct.

In addition to these items, we will also have consent items to address. There are curriculum proposals, a personnel report, revised bylaws for the Paper Technology Foundation, this board’s meeting dates for 2023, and financial reports.
Thank you, Chair Chen-Zhang, and greetings to all of you joining us today. It’s good to be together again. Though we last met less than two months ago, it’s been a productive period on a variety of fronts. In the interest of time, I’m going to review just some of that activity, and I’ll begin with gratitude.

We’re at a point in the semester where students may feel they are hitting their stride—or they may be experiencing feeling a lot of stress. Regardless, as students pursue their studies and co-curricular activities, we want to continue to encourage them to prioritize their well-being.

To that end, our student leaders organized fall mental health week and a mental health summit, keeping the importance of emotional, psychological and social wellness at the forefront. We appreciate their leadership and raising awareness about the array of resources and services the University provides.

At our last trustees’ meeting, I shared news of one of our latest additions to mental health support—24-7-365 teletherapy and crisis counseling through a service called Uwill—which was just featured in an October Wall Street Journal article.

Our Dean of Students, Dr. Reetha Raveendran, as well as Western Student Association Chief of Staff Elisha Ewing were both quoted in the piece.

Employee engagement workshops:
I also want to thank all those colleagues who have participated in our Employee Engagement Workshop series. On Tuesday, we held the third installment of this three-session series, in which we have focused on ways to enhance and improve our workplace environment and amplify the employee voice.

Through this community-engaged versus top-down approach to advancing change, our goal is to take those ideas to create an actionable, measurable plan leading to improvement in the felt experience on campus.

We will be sharing those ideas with the full community to surface the most promising among them. Ideas that get prioritized by the community will move forward. We will then measure the impact to see how we are doing. While we shouldn’t expect change overnight, we should expect progress.
I also want to thank all those who attended the provost candidate presentations last week. The chief academic officer is a critically important role. The perspectives of faculty, staff and students in the search process is likewise critical.

I appreciate the engagement of those who took time to provide thoughtful feedback on the candidates. I also want to extend express my deep gratitude to the Provost Search Advisory Committee, which was led Dr. Sarah Summy and Dr. Brian Gogan. Outstanding job, all.

Later in today’s meeting, we’ll be getting a report on Bronco Connect, a new living learning community linked with the Empowering Futures housing and dining scholarship. This scholarship and Bronco Connect are among the many ways we are investing in student success through the generosity of the Empowering Futures Gift.

This semester, campus will be apprised of other Empowering Futures initiatives under development—the WMU Paid Internship Program, which will provide wages for students exploring internship experiences at private and nonprofit organizations, as well as the Navigators Program, which involves the creation of a network of Student Success Navigators trained to provide proactive, personalized support to undergrads across their academic and well-being needs.

This program, which scales up similar programming in pockets of the University, is designed to help students successfully journey through the complexity of college life. No student has to go it alone; all students deserve a variety of mentors who will show them the ropes and help them thrive.

At Western, we’re fortunate to have friends, alumni, donors and other partners in our community who believe strongly in this institution and have helped it thrive. One of those individuals is the late Irving S. Gilmore. Last month as we celebrated our homecoming and marked a special milestone for the College of Fine Arts—it’s 50th anniversary—we also announced that the School of Music will be named after Mr. Gilmore.

A business leader and gifted pianist who passed away in 1986, his legacy is one of generosity and the University has greatly benefited. The Irving S. Gilmore Foundation has granted more than $30 million to WMU since the mid-1980s.

Past contributions include $2 million to help fund the Irving S. Gilmore Theatre Complex and more recently, in 2020, $2 million to support our new Virtual Imaging Technology Lab initiative and the signature dance studio to be located atop the renovated Dunbar Hall. We are deeply grateful for the remarkable support. The school will officially assume its new name in January.