Western Michigan University
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Proposed Meeting Minutes

September 28, 2023

The Western Michigan University Board of Trustees (BOT) Formal Session was called to order by Chair Shelly Edgerton at 11:04AM on Thursday, September 28, 2023. The meeting was conducted in a mixed modality with participants both attending in person in the Student Center, Room 2209 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 Kahler Schuemann by 5PM, Wednesday, September 27th.

Presiding in person were Chair Shelly Edgerton along with Trustees Kelly Burris, Lynn Chen-Zhang, Jon Hoadley, Kurtis Trevan, Alan Turfe, and Lisa Williams.

A motion to accept the September 28, 2023 BOT agenda was made by Trustee Jon Hoadley with a second by Trustee Alan Turfe. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion to accept the minutes as exhibited from the June 29, 2023 Meeting was made by Trustee Alan Turfe, with a second by Trustee Lis Williams. The motion passed unanimously.

Remarks were provided by Chair Shelly Edgerton – Attachment A, followed by remarks from President Ed Montgomery – Attachment B.

Faculty Senate President Sarah Summy and Western Student Association President Kayla Byrd provided comments regarding their respective areas and their ongoing activities and initiatives relating to shared governance, promoting student involvement, and academic enrichment.

Next, President Edward Montgomery recognized the Western Michigan University employee graduates from the last commencement. They included: Gerald Brooks, Elise DeCamp, Dr. James Rhodes, Jasper Ballinger, Malia Roberts, Thomas Rossiter, Michael Galea, Dr. Farhang Motallebi Araghi, Nathan Lisak, Denisha Griffey, Ronald Dillard, and Stephanie Stanton.

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

As Action Items, Board Secretary Kahler Schuemann presented a resolution to celebrate former Trustee Shani J. Penn’s Leadership Legacy. A motion to accept the Trustee Shani J. Penn Leadership Legacy Resolution was made by Trustee Kelly Burris, with a second by Trustee Alan Turfe, and passed unanimously.

With the next agenda item, Secretary Kahler Schuemann sought approval for Trustee Alan Turfe to move into the vacant Board of Trustees Vice Chair role. A motion to approve Alan Turfe as Vice Chair was made by Trustee Jon Hoadley with a second by Trustee Lynn Chen-Zhang. The motion passed unanimously.
Vice Chair Alan Turfe next overviewed the Western Michigan University External Audit. A motion to accept the Western Michigan University External Audit was made by Trustee Kurtis Trevan with a second by Trustee Jon Hoadley. The motion passed unanimously.

For the next agenda item, VP for Business and Finance Jan Van Der Kley sought approval for the State Capital Outlay Building Project Priority List. A motion to accept the State Capital Outlay Building Project Priority List was made by Trustee Kelly Burris with a second by Trustee Lynn Chen-Zhang. The motion passed unanimously.

Provost Julian Vasquez Heilig then presented the proposed WMU Starting Gate Lease Agreement. A motion to accept the WMU Starting Gate Lease Agreement was made by Vice Chair Alan Turfe, with a second by Trustee Kurtis Trevan, and passed unanimously.

With the next agenda item, VP for Student Affairs Diane Anderson sought support for a proclamation recognizing Gamma Beta Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. A motion to accept the Gamma Beta Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. Proclamation was made by Trustee Kelly Burris with a second by Trustee Lynn Chen-Zhang. The motion passed unanimously.

VP Jan Van Der Kley then presented the proposed Conveyance of Facilities Located at Lake Michigan College. A motion to accept the proposed Conveyance of Facilities Located at Lake Michigan College was made by Trustee Jon Hoadley, with a second by Vice Chair Alan Turfe, and passed unanimously.

Vice Chair Alan Turfe next sought support for Presidential Assessment and Compensation. A motion to accept the proposed Presidential Assessment and Compensation was made by Vice Chair Alan Turfe with a second by Trustee Kurtis Trevan. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion to approve the Consent Items was made by Trustee Jon Hoadley, with a second from Trustee Lisa Williams. The BOT unanimously approved the following Consent Items as exhibited: A. Personnel Report; B. WMU Board of Trustees Meeting Dates 2024; C. Annuity and Life Income Funds Performance Report; and D. Operating Cash Investment Performance Report.

Tim Bober, Interim President of WMU Professional Instructors Association provided commentary during General Public Comments along with Katherine Harte-DeCoux, and Justin Mendoza.

The BOT meeting ended at 12:15PM following a motion to adjourn by Vice Chair Alan Turfe, with a second from Trustee Lisa Williams, and unanimous approval.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]

Kahler B. Schuemann, Ph.D.
Chief of Staff and Secretary to the Board of Trustees
Western Michigan University
Before we dive into today’s agenda, I’d like us all to take a moment to reflect on memory and the legacy of Trustee Shani Penn. Her unexpected passing in August was a big loss to our institution and our community.

I want to acknowledge the beautiful memorial that was held on Tuesday for Trustee Penn. It featured remarks from Trustee Williams, our shared governance partners, Shani’s sorority sisters from Delta Sigma Theta, and Shani’s mother, Sylvia Penn. We presented Shani’s family with a Leadership Legacy Resolution during the ceremony, and we will be voting to accept the resolution later today.

As we know, Shani had deep roots here as a Bronco and with the Southeast Michigan region. She was a brilliant political advisor, a successful businesswoman and a passionate supporter of our University.

Shani was appointed to this board in 2016 and her service as vice-chairwoman has made all of us better trustees of this great institution. It is up to each of us to carry on her work through our efforts and our leadership. Her legacy will forever be a part of Western Michigan University.

Let us now have a moment of silence in remembrance of Trustee Penn.

Thank you.

We have a full agenda today. First, I’d like to thank Carol Cartwright, a highly respected voice in higher education and the former president of Bowling Green State University and Kent State University, for guiding our board through a retreat this week where we worked on enhancing our skills as they relate to our fiduciary responsibilities and areas of oversight. The retreat was very productive, and we continue to make progress as we optimize resources.

I’d also like to thank our partners at Plante Moran for their assistance in guiding us through a University-wide audit. Audits help us improve efficiency, identify potential risk exposures, and support sound decision-making. We’ll be hearing a report today on that process from Trustee Turfe. Trustee Turfe will also lead us through a recommendation by the Presidential Compensation and Assessment Committee.

As I mentioned at the top of the meeting, we presented the family of Shani Penn with a Leadership Legacy Resolution in her memory, and we will formally vote on that resolution in the action items. With that also comes the election of a new vice chair for the Board. Dr. Schuemann will lead us through that exercise.

We have several presentations to hear today. First up will be President Montgomery, who will share some updates from around campus. He will also be acknowledging a number of employees who received their degrees this summer while employed at Western — congratulations to those employees. We’ll also be hearing from our shared governance leaders.
Jan Van Der Kley, our vice president for business and finance, has two items to cover today and will be providing a presentation on our Five-Year Capital Outlay Priority List. Our No. 1 priority at this time are renovations and additions to Knauss Hall, which was built in 1971 and requires some significant upgrades.

She will also be introducing and leading us through an action item regarding the conveyance of facilities located at Lake Michigan College. This property previously served as a regional center and has most recently been operating with limited use by Western.

We will also hear from Provost Vasquez Heilig on the continuation of a lease agreement for the Haworth College of Business’ Starting Gate initiative. Starting Gate provides resources to student entrepreneurs and connects them to experts in the community who can move their businesses forward.

Vice President for Student Services, Diane Anderson, will present an action item to formally recognize the Gamma Beta Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. as the first historically African American fraternity on Western’s campus. The fraternity will be celebrating its 75th diamond jubilee anniversary weekend in October.
Thank you, Chair Edgerton.

I’d like to echo the Chair’s words about Trustee Penn. She was a tireless advocate for our students and a warm and wonderful person. Her passing leaves a truly profound void. Even as we mourn her loss, we must strive to advance her legacy and continue the work of empowering students to learn so they find meaningful careers and enjoy fulfilling lives.

Turning now to the start of the academic year, I’m happy to say that our campus is off to a strong start. We recently celebrated the grand opening of our new Student Center, a place that will foster growth, collaboration and togetherness. The Student Center is a truly world-class facility that is welcoming, inclusive and supportive of all who enter. The building will be formally dedicated in a ceremony immediately following today’s meeting, and I look forward to seeing you there.

We also celebrated the 41st anniversary of my favorite Western tradition—the Bronco Bash. What I love about the Bash is how it provides students the opportunity to easily find new interests and build connectivity to others who share their passion. More than 17,000 individuals showed up to kick off the school year.

I’m pleased to share with you some key updates regarding our fall 2023 enrollment and retention rates. As you know, in 2022 we enrolled the largest freshman class in several years; and I’m proud to say that our first-to-second year retention reached 79.8%, a rate that has been exceeded only once in the past 23 years.

We also continue to be a leader in providing opportunities for historically underrepresented populations—retention rates among Black and African American students climbed 3.1 percentage points this year on top of a 5.2 percentage point gain last year, while retention rates for Hispanic students grew 3.9 percentage points.

Meanwhile, graduate student enrollment grew by 7.2%, which is an all-time record for our University.

At a time when higher education institutions in Michigan are facing significant demographic challenges, we should take pride in these victories. They show that students understand a Western education sets them up for a successful career and a well-balanced life, guided by a sense of resilience and purpose.

I have a few more examples of positive news I would like to share. First, congratulations to Julian Jones, Western’s senior associate athletic director for Broncos emPOWERed and Championship Culture.
In his first year on staff, he received the 1-MAC Administrator of the Year award from the Mid-American Conference. The award is a testament to the great work of our student-athletes led Diversity Task Force, with leadership from Julian, Dr. Candy McCorkle, Dr. Luchara Wallace and Keanah Smith. Congrats to Julian and the team!

I’d also like to take a moment to recognize the work of Department of English Professor Jonathan Bush and his English education students. This past spring, Dr. Bush and his students offered a series of workshops for Kalamazoo Public Schools students who were writing application essays for the Kalamazoo Community Foundation scholarship portal. In addition to helping students with their scholarship essays, Western students also provided valuable insights into college life.

We recently learned that the Community Foundation awarded over $26,000 in scholarships to the students who participated in Professor Bush’s workshops. This was a fantastic opportunity for the two groups to connect and share advice.

Congratulations to WMU’s ROTC program, recently named top in the lower peninsula, third in the Midwest and 17th in the country for the cadets’ performance during the annual ROTC Cadet Summer Training camp in Fort Knox, Kentucky, one of the largest training events for the U.S. Army. 13 of our students received outstanding or excellent marks.

Congratulations to all of our 2023 Fall Awards Celebration recipients. Tomorrow we will hand out awards for Emerging Scholar, Distinguished Teacher, Distinguished Service and Distinguished Faculty Scholar. We also will be honoring our Excellence in Diversity recipients and our Annual Make a Difference awardees beginning at 11 a.m. in the Fetzer Center’s Kirsch Auditorium.

This is an annual celebration, formally known as Fall Convocation. We look forward to showcasing our outstanding faculty and staff and their incredible work. This year I’m pleased that one of the Excellence in Diversity recipients is student—Leah Latumaerissa is the current DEI chair of the Western Student Association. Prior to becoming an active member of WSA, Leah was a leader in the Nunusaku Student Association, students who are from Moluccas Islands in Indonesia. She’s doing great work in those organizations, and we appreciate her leadership.

Finally, I’d like to acknowledge the city of Kalamazoo for its ongoing work to enhance lighting on West Michigan Avenue and Fraternity Village Drive. These efforts will help increase pedestrian safety for our students and our community.