

**West Liberty University  
Board of Governors**

---

**Minutes  
August 18, 2021**

Attendance:

Jack Adams, Michael Baker, Arlene Brantley, Richard Carter, Jamie Evick, Ryan Glanville, Mackenzi Jones, Rich Lucas, Jason Metz, Stephanie Shaw

Unable to Attend:

David McKinley

Administration/Faculty/Staff:

Scott Cook, Mary Ann Edwards, W. Franklin Evans, Diana Harto, Angie Hill, Stephanie Hooper, Karen Kettler, Jason Koegler, Jeremy Larance, Zachary Loughman, Ryan McCullough, Joe Rodella, Shemrico Stanley, Bonnie Suderman

**I. Call to Order/Roll Call/Quorum and Mission Statement**

Chair Lucas called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. and a quorum was established.

**II. Introductions**

New campus representatives to the board were introduced.

**III. Public Comment**

None.

**IV. Agenda Order**

No changes to the agenda order.

**V. Approval of Minutes\***

**A. Minutes of the Full Board June 2, 2021\***

On motion by Richard Carter and seconded by Michael Baker, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the minutes of the full Board of June 2, 2021.

**B. Minutes of the Executive Committee August 4, 2021\***

On motion by Rich Lucas and seconded by Richard Carter, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the minutes of the Executive Committee of August 4, 2021.

**VI. Board Items for Approval\***

**A. Tuition & Fee Corrections\***

Ms. Hooper presented the following tuition and fee corrections:

TUITION & FEES	PREVIOUSLY APPROVED	REQUESTED	REASON FOR CHANGE
RNBSN	\$3,566	One Rate: \$3,655/sem	Typo
MA Art Therapy	\$0	Resident: \$475/hr Non-Resident: \$600/hr	Was not included by previous CFO
Physician's Assistant	Class of 2024 Resident: \$30,561 Annual	Class of 2024 Resident: \$30,124 Annual	Error
MS SLP Application Fee	\$0	\$40	Was not included by previous CFO

**On motion by Jack Adams and seconded by Richard Carter, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to approve the corrected Tuition and Fees as presented.**

**B. Aquatic Conservation Center**

Dr. Karen Kettler and Dr. Zachary Loughman presented information with regard to the Aquatic Conservation Center. This will be a fully funded project from a grant through the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection. Dr. Loughman gave a background on the reason for the funding and a breakdown on how it will be used. Once the building is complete, there will come a point when WLU will be able to offer a new aquarium track. This will be a single story building, with a classroom, three laboratories, offices, and storage. The projection is to have official clearance by the end of September, site development beginning in winter/early spring, construction late spring/early summer, and the building completed by fall. A brief discussion followed with regard to funding, operation, and location.

**On motion by Jack Adams and seconded by Richard Carter, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to authorize the construction of the Aquatic Conservation Center, pending the official award, and the Board authorizes the president and administration to update the Master Plan and allow additional funding as they deem necessary.**

**VII. President's Report**

Dr. Evans welcomed everyone to the new season of change, with a new academic year, attitude, perspective, and new opportunities.

With regard to the pandemic, the CIRT (Critical Incident Response Team) continues to meet and evaluate all new information. A mask-mandate is in place for all students, faculty, and staff. Masks are to be worn in all University buildings and will continue indefinitely. Facilities and maintenance continue to do tip top cleaning of all areas, as well as Sodexo and their employees with regard to sanitizing. Our healthcare workers, along with athletic trainers, have done an amazing job with testing and maintaining quarantine areas. We have received federal funding of institutional dollars which will be used for a list of things COVID related, and also be able to reimburse ourselves for some other expenses with COVID dollars.

How did we seize the moment?

- Remained knowledgeable of information, research, and best practices.
- Met COVID standards and stabilized the campus.
- Kept residence halls open.
- Distributed CARES Act funds.
- Shifted instructional methods and delivery.
- Supported our amazing athletic teams.

Reflecting on the positives of the last seven months:

- In the spring of 2021 we had more students than spring of 2020.
- The MS in Exercise Physiology and BA in Music, and MS in Athletic Training have been approved, along with HLC approval for the MA in Art Therapy and MS in Speech-Language Pathology.
- The NASM (National Association of Schools of Music) has reaffirmed WLU's accreditation.
- Two new clinics are in operation and taking appointments this semester; the Speech and Hearing Clinic and a Behavioral Health Clinic.
- The West Family Athletic Complex and Tim Weaver Memorial Track are complete.
- The new College of Liberal and Creative Arts has come together from the former College of Liberal Arts and College of Arts and Communication.
- WLU held four separate ceremonies, graduating 406 students, plus an additional 17 students from the PA Program, who also have a 100% pass rate on the PANCE (Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination).
- The WLU Foundation exceeded their fundraising goal for the last fiscal year.

WLU's strategic goals are:

- Academic Success
- University Branding
- Operational Excellence
- Student Experience
- Community Engagement

Dr. Evans' Presidential priorities are:

- To increase enrollment; we need students.
- Maintain financial stability; bring in more than we are spending.
- Foster student success: make sure students are getting a quality education and are a success on campus to equip them with the skills to go out and get a job or to go on to graduate school.
- Strengthen community outreach; people need to know what we are doing.
- Enhance Alumni engagement; bring alumni back into the fold and let them know how valued they are to the institution.

Recent changes were noted:

- We have a new set of BOG members, which is a good thing. This is Dr. Metz first meeting, along with Mackenzi Jones and Ryan Glanville. Six of the eleven board members are brand new.
- New committees of the BOG have been formed with Richard Carter, Chair of Governance, David McKinley, Chair of Finance, Arlene Brantley, Chair of Academic Affairs, and Stephanie Shaw, Chair of Student Life.
- New leadership appointments are:
  - Dr. Bonnie Suderman, Vice President of Academic Affairs
  - Ms. Lori Hudson, Chief Financial Officer
  - Dr. Cecelia Konchar Farr, Dean, College of Liberal and Creative Arts
  - Dr. Ann Saurbier, Gary E. West College of Business
  - Dr. Vincent Mumford, Director of Graduate Studies
- Various facility upgrades have been made throughout the summer, including a complete overhaul over the HVAC system in Main Hall.
- An endowed professorship has been established, with a plan is to have an endowed professorship in each of the colleges.
- Securing grant dollars is a great way to fund projects on campus and the College of Sciences is doing a wonderful job of it, along with the College of Education and Human Performance. All of the colleges need to be doing something similar.
- As we increase the number of Graduate programs offered, we also increase the number of Graduate students.
- Ongoing efforts continue to as we focus on DEI initiatives.

What potentially causes alarm:

- Change, because we cannot stay where we are; we have to move forward. We'll probably get push back, but it requires us to look very carefully at our programs and make sure we're getting a return on our investment. The minimal amount won't work anymore.
- New revenue streams: we need other avenues for bringing in money. We need to tap into some additional resources. Board of Governors members and who they know are influential for dollars and students.
- Enrollment decline is a concern; for the last five years enrollment has gone down. We were anticipating a decline in enrollment, but one in-state student equates to \$19,000. Being down 150 students, we're talking well over \$2.85M that we had last year that we will not realize because of that decline. The population has declined across WV and our Metro rate is not competitive.
- Deferred maintenance: we cannot keep patching the Main Hall roof and it needs taken care of, along with other issues across campus.
- We are paying almost \$300,000 a year for the Highlands Center that's not being utilized. Mr. Koezler and his committee members are working diligently to regroup and get a better return on our investment.

- The West Event Center is not being used and deteriorating. We need to put that space to good use.
- Accreditation and compliance; we have a report that's due in the spring and we're working on that fourth-year report that we've got to get done.
- Equity and compensation; we have varying amounts getting paid for any and everything. We've made some major headway in resolving that issue.
- Keeping the campus safe between COVID and everything else.
- Telling our story with a marketing problem that needs to be addressed. There is a great story on this campus, and we need to make sure people hear and know about it.
- There hasn't been much alumni inactivity, and we're trying to bring them back. Alumni have to realize that we need and depend on them and need to play more of an active role, not just a bystander role. We are establishing chapters and by homecoming should have more chapters in place.

Chance/Change:

- We need to take some risks and take the chance.
- Improve our brand and image.
- Be impactful on why we're doing what we do.
- We are looking at our first doctoral program and working on a survey for the school systems to see what the interest is.
- We need to write and secure more grant funding.
- Are we ready for this new season of change?

## VIII. Reports

### A. Interim Provost (Suderman)

Dr. Suderman is working on the goals she was given and has filed an application for the first full patent, the investors being Dr. Horzempa and a graduate student. Goals given are:

- Get the five deans (three are brand new to the institution) up to speed with processes with their faculty before the permanent Provost comes to campus.
- Updating policies – Met with the faculty senate chair and the faculty handbook has not been looked at in many years. The goal is to be able to develop very clear policies and processes that are meeting what HR and other areas are doing so issues don't become stumbling blocks.
- Accreditation – An action plan is being set-up of what is due and when in order to pull it all together in a quick fashion. This is a major undertaking but it can be done.
- As interim, Dr. Suderman's personal goal is for the permanent provost to be able to walk in and not find any disasters or huge problems that were hidden before they can move on to meet University goals.

### B. Enrollment (Cook)

Mr. Cook gave an enrollment update as of August 17, 2021. Overall enrollment is down 6.5%, first-time freshmen are down 26 students, transfers down 10 students, returning students down 152, graduate students are up 24, and housing is down 60 students. With two weeks to go the numbers will change; we picked up 5/6 students today. Challenges exist with COVID impacting more than we thought this year. Some students are waiting until January to return. The population loss in WV is 3.2%, with much of the same across the country. There is a renewed interest in the trades and high schools are steering many students in that direction. The job market is good and that also makes a difference. The out-of-state metro rate is not the incentive it once was, and we are dealing with these challenges. There is a renewed interest in diversity and inclusion, and students don't see people like themselves enrolled here. If there are programs WLU has but they don't have in other areas, such as Zoo Science and Dental Hygiene, students receive in-state tuition to attend those programs at WLU. International students are an investment, but there are opportunities. We will have 60 guidance counselors on our campus this fall from local high schools, presenting a great recruiting opportunity. The Enrollment Plan was last updated in 2014. At the enrollment retreat this fall we will bring that group together, get focused, and provide the spark. Not having families on campus really hurt us last year, if they're on campus we will get them here. We had no families on campus until late spring due to COVID. We have waived the ACT/SAT and purchased names trying to get those

numbers up. We believe in what we do here, what we have, and things will get turned around. At exit interviews students are citing COVID and waiting on the mask mandate to go away as their reason not to return to WLU.

**C. Staff (Glanville)**

Mr. Glanville stated that staff has not yet met so there are no updates.

**D. Faculty (Metz)**

Dr. Metz stated that he was just voted into the position Monday and has nothing to report.

**E. SGA (Jones)**

Ms. Jones updated the Board on the SGA officers, those being Alexandria Black, Vice President, Maddie Linzy, Secretary, Matthew O'Neill, Treasurer, and Alexia Schmader, Director of Programming. Homecoming planning has been ongoing over the summer, along with setting goals and ways to benefit the campus. Other projects are ideas to keep student on campus on weekend and to have more overall involvement with organizations and clubs. Students are looking at a pet designated area, more community service, additional emergency phones on campus, and utilization of the library.

**F. WLU Foundation (Hill)**

Ms. Hill reviewed the Development Report for FY21 as of June 30, 2021. The audit is currently in progress and a report will be sent at a later date. Total revenue was \$1,960,000, 13% ahead of FY20. New donors were up 38% with 785 brand-new first-time givers, helping us build a base for the future. Alumni giving is up 15% over the previous year and our retention rate is 52%, which is 14% higher than the industry average. The Development Plan was finalized in the spring and approved by the Cabinet using an inclusive process with feedback from the deans. The upcoming Coach Bob Roe reunion will be held September 17-18 with 60 RSVP's to date. The goal is to raise \$50,000 from this event. Homecoming planning is ongoing with a new look and sponsorship packages this year. There are comprehensive packages for the weekend but also our new revised event Friday night. A Recognition Banquet will be held October 15<sup>th</sup> with opportunities for tickets and tables. The event will be a fundraiser to support the annual fund. The information is just getting out and the event will be held in the Elbin Library. Two new Foundation Board members are Clifton Spinner and Christine Carter. New Foundation employee Kyle Lutz started in July.

**IX. Finance Report (Hooper)**

Ms. Hooper noted that this would be her last financial update to the Board and that it's been a pleasure to sit in on the financials for the last few months; Ms. Hudson just started on Monday. Financial statements are in progress with a preliminary report by September 15<sup>th</sup> and finalized by October 15<sup>th</sup>. Assuming the State is able to finalize the report by that date, a team will come to campus to present the audit to the Finance Committee and the Board.

Ms. Hooper reviewed the federal monies received and how it was disbursed. There are still substantial balances in these funds. Much of the money was spent on technology for remote learning and COVID related items such as cleaning expenses, masks, sanitizer, plexiglass, etc. These funds have specified requirements as to how they are to be used to defray expenses related to the virus; we have many projects that fall under those requirements.

We were able to balance the FY21 budget of \$38,000,000, with around \$16,000 over. In April or May we weren't sure if we were going to be able to balance, with the possibility of \$1.5 million over; we were able to pivot and control expenses. With the enrollment decline Mr. Cook discussed, it will put us in the same position, after determining the fall revenue, and may make for some tough decisions to balance the budget for FY 22. Decisions need to be made now in order to make sure we can bring to this Board a balanced budget or better.

**X. Information Gathering**

None.

**XI. Next Meeting Date – Wednesday, October 13, 2021**

**XII. Adjournment**

**On motion by Richard Carter and seconded by Mackenzi Jones, it was unanimously adopted by the West Liberty University Board of Governors to adjourn the meeting at 5:29 p.m.**

Richard Lucas \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

Jamie Evick \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary