

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

September 2, 2022

9:30 a.m.

Chancellor's Boardroom, H.F. Robinson Building, Room 501A

The Board of Trustees of Western Carolina University met in regular session on September 2, 2022, in Room 501A of the H.F.R. Administration Building. Chair Roberts called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

**ATTENDANCE**

**The following members of the Board were present:**

Present from the Board: Chair Bob Roberts, Mrs. Haden Boliek, Mr. William Brawley, Ms. Becky Brown, Mr. Casey Cooper, Mr. Joe Crocker, Mrs. Kathryn Greeley, Mr. Tim Haskett, Mr. Ken Hughes, Mr. Bryant Kinney, Mr. Jake Robinson, Mrs. Rebecca Schlosser (via Zoom), and Ms. Estefany Gordillo-Rivas.

**Present – Faculty and staff of Western Carolina University:**

Chancellor Kelli R. Brown; Dr. Richard Starnes, Provost; Dr. Kae Livsey, Faculty Senate Chair; Dr. Betsy Aspinwall, Staff Senate Chair; Ms. Allison Henson, Alumni Association President; Dr. Melissa Wargo, Chief of Staff; Mr. Mike Byers, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance; Mr. Shea Browning, General Counsel; Ms. Jamie Raynor, Vice Chancellor for Advancement; Dr. Sam Miller, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs; Mr. Craig Fowler, Chief Information Officer; Mr. Kyle Pifer, Deputy Athletics Director; Dr. Cory Causby, Associate Vice Chancellor of Human Resources and Payroll; Dr. Kim Winter, Dean, College of Education and Allied Professions; Mr. Tim Metz, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Institutional Research and Effective Planning; Ms. Karen Woody, Budget Officer; Ms. Kathy Boland, Staff Senator; Ms. Carol Hicks, Staff Senator, Ms. Alexandria “Ale” Coleman, Administrative Support Associate; Dr. Kia Asberg, Faculty Senator, Ms. Melissa Day, Staff Senator, and Dr. Yancey Gulley, Faculty Senator; and Ms. Jessica Woods, Assistant Secretary to the Board of Trustees.

**WELCOME**

Chair Roberts welcomed the Faculty and Staff Senate Chairs, Alumni Association President, as well as staff and faculty attending the meeting, via Zoom and joining, via LiveStream.

**ROLL CALL**

Ms. Woods called the roll of the Board members in attendance. A quorum of the board was present.

**ETHICS STATEMENT**

Chair Roberts read the Ethics Statement as follows:

“As Chair of the Board of Trustees, it is my responsibility to remind all members of the Board of their duty under the State Government Ethics Act to avoid conflicts of interest and appearances of conflicts of interest as required by this Act. Each member has received the agenda and related information for this Board of Trustees’ meeting. If any Board member knows of any conflict of interest or appearance of

conflict with respect to any matter coming before the Board of Trustees at this meeting, the conflict or appearance of conflict should be identified at this time.” **No conflicts of interest were disclosed.**

Chair Roberts reminded the board that the meeting was a public meeting and is being recorded, via the Zoom platform, and is being livestreamed.

### **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Chair Roberts read the Land Acknowledgement as follows:

“The Western Carolina University campus is situated within the ancestral homelands of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. At WCU our work seeks to embrace and connect to this Cherokee landscape as we work to reinforce our mission at WCU. We will work to actively engage our community with the extraordinary indigenous identity and culture of this special place.”

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Roberts asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2022, Regular Session, Board of Trustees meeting (TAB B-1). Mr. Brawley made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Greeley seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Chair Roberts asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the July 14, 2022, Special Called Meeting of the Board of Trustees (TAB B-2). Mr. Robinson made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Crocker seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Chair Roberts asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the August 2, 2022, Board of Trustees Executive Committee Agenda Setting Meeting (TAB B-3). Ms. Boliek made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Cooper seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

### **COMMENTS FROM CHANCELLOR KELLI R. BROWN**

Chancellor Brown welcomed the Trustees, Executive Council, and the Faculty Senate and Staff Senate Chairs and Senators who joined the meeting in person, or via livestream or zoom. Chancellor Brown also welcomed faculty and staff and members of the news media and others who participated, via livestream.

Chancellor Brown shared students are active and engaged, faculty and staff are busy and involved, and we are already making great strides for this to be a great fall semester. Chancellor Brown noted that Western Carolina University held the Fall Opening Assembly, the Inclusive Excellence Forum, and New Student Convocation over the past few weeks.

Chancellor Brown shared some organizational changes that are happening within the Office of Internal Audit. She noted that starting September 1<sup>st</sup>, the Office of Internal Audit will now be housed organizationally within the Legal Counsel Office. The Chief Audit Officer will continue to report directly to the Chancellor with a dotted line to the Board of Trustee’s Finance and Audit Committee Chair. The Chancellor will continue to be responsible and oversee the annual performance evaluation of this position. She noted that the General Counsel will be responsible for the day-to-day management of Audit, and its Chief Audit Officer, budgeting for Audit, personnel issues, strategic planning, setting objectives and priorities, assessing quality, and ensuring coordination with the Legal Counsel Office and across the university. Chancellor Brown also shared that effective September 1<sup>st</sup>; the Legal Counsel Office will now be referred to as the Office of Legal Counsel and Institutional Integrity.

Chancellor Brown shared an update on enrollment. She shared that currently, we have about 1,950 freshmen which will likely be one of the largest classes in Western Carolina University’s history. Chancellor Brown shared an update on budget and salaries. She shared that she remains grateful for the 3.5% across the board increase effective July 1<sup>st</sup> for most of our permanent Faculty and Staff, which

coupled with the 2.5% received in January, marks the largest legislative increase we've seen in faculty pay in two decades. She noted that the increase was processed in the July 2022 payroll thanks to the incredible effort from our Human Resources and Payroll staff. Chancellor Brown noted that we are also getting clarity on the 1% labor market reserve, (LMAR) that is intended to address critical staffing concerns. She shared that these investments in faculty and staff compensation are a welcome relief, and she is committed to advocating for additional resources to make headway against the inflationary pressures that continue to impact our workforce.

Chancellor Brown shared University Accolades with the Trustees. Chancellor Brown reminded Trustees of Upcoming Events including The Rocks Ribbon-Cutting, football games, 48<sup>th</sup> Mountain Heritage Day, and The Steam Plant Grand Opening, Chancellor Brown shared that with the help of Trustee Becky Brown, the keynote speaker for the steam plant grand opening will be North Carolina Labor Commissioner Josh Dobson, former McDowell County legislator and spouse to WCU alum, Valerie Dobson.

Chancellor Brown thanked each of the Trustees for the support they provide to Western Carolina University.

### **COMMENTS FROM CHAIR**

Chair Roberts thanked Chancellor Brown for her Chancellor's Report. Chair Roberts shared that since the last meeting in June, Western Carolina University has received more good news from the State Legislators regarding employee salary increases; Western Carolina University celebrated several Freshman Student send-offs across multiple communities and across state lines and we held a very successful Freshman convocation honoring 1900+ students on this major milestone in their lives.

He mentioned that over the summer, he met with incoming and outgoing Faculty/Staff/SGA chairs to learn about their transitions and how Trustees can work together for the betterment of WCU. He noted that the governance is aligned with a common goal to create a sense of community and reengage/reinvigorate the WCU culture in a post COVID-19 world. He thanked the Chairs for their hard work and input.

Chair Roberts shared that he and Chancellor Brown participated in her biennial review with President Hans. They discussed progress to goals as outlined in her self-assessment, Board survey and her charge from President Hans. He shared that he and President Hans agreed that Chancellor Brown has made great strides since her arrival at WCU in the middle of a pandemic and are very pleased with the direction of WCU and want her to retire in purple and gold. President Hans shared that Trustees could help Chancellor Brown with the key metrics that outline success: Four-Year Graduation Rate, Student Debt at Graduation, Education and Related Expenses per Degree, and Retention Rates. Chair Roberts congratulated Chancellor Brown on a good review.

Chair Roberts reminded the Trustees that Ms. Woods recently emailed about the 2023 AGB National Conference on Trusteeship which is scheduled for April 2-4, 2023, in San Diego, CA. He asked Trustees to let Ms. Woods know by December 1<sup>st</sup> if they can attend the conference. He noted that he would like to see WCU have a good representation at this event. These events always provide attendees with current principles and best practices of good governance.

Chari Roberts reminded trustees of the 7 Strategic Directives that drive governance: Academic Excellence, Student Experience, Inclusive Excellence, Regional Development & Engagement, Employee Excellence, Responsible Stewardship, and Vision Advancement

Chair Roberts shared that we will be sending out a survey after the BOT meeting, again, to help provide feedback on ways, the effectiveness of BOT meetings can be improved.

Chair Roberts noted that he is blessed to work alongside each of the Trustees to make Western Carolina University an even better University. He thanked each of the Trustees for their continued focus, leadership, and service to the board.

Chair Roberts featured Immediate Past Chair, Trustee Bryant Kinney and asked him to share his story of what drives him to be an advocate for WCU.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN ANNUAL REPORT**

Chair Roberts recognized Dean Winter for the Strategic Plan Annual Report. She and Mr. Metz shared the 2021-22 Annual Report.

### **REPORT OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

Chair Roberts recognized Ms. Boliek to give the report of the Academic Affairs and Personnel Committee. The Academic Affairs and Personnel Committee considered two discussion items and one information items.

Ms. Boliek shared that Dr. Starnes provided updates on enrollment, a comprehensive Retention and Persistence Strategic Plan to better serve Western Carolina University students, recommendations from the Standing Committee on Faculty Salaries as part of a comprehensive approach begun in 2020 to address faculty salary issues over time, the Campus Theme on Mental Health and Wellbeing and Mental Health First Aid training for faculty and staff, the Performance Funding Model, the ROI study and Kitty Hawk. Provost Starnes also noted outstanding accreditation results and several exemplary awards made to numerous faculty members.

Ms. Boliek shared that the Fiscal Year 22-23 North Carolina State Budget included a 3.5% across-the-board salary increase for permanent part-time and full-time, benefits-eligible Faculty and Staff, a 1% Labor Market Salary Reserve designed to retain critical talent and assist in addressing labor market needs, and WCU was allocated approximately \$2.1 million for non-promotional salary adjustments for faculty and staff. The UNC System and the North Carolina Office of State Human Resources are implementing one-time bonus programs designed to provide an additional resource designed to address critical recruitment and/or retention issues. Dr. Causby reviewed the WCU voluntary turnover for fiscal year 2022.

Ms. Boliek shared that the committee was provided information regarding new hires; 11 faculty appointments, 11 administrative appointments and 18 athletic appointments in TAB C-5 of the Trustee materials.

The Committee had no closed session items.

### **REPORT OF ADMINISTRATION, GOVERNANCE, AND TRUSTEESHIP COMMITTEE**

Chair Roberts recognized Mrs. Greeley to give the report of the Administration, Governance, and Trusteeship Committee. The Administration, Governance, and Trusteeship heard three discussion items and four information items in open session and considered one action item in closed session.

Ms. Greeley shared that Ms. Agner provided a legislative update on the activities of the short session of the NC General Assembly, which can be found in Tab D-2a and 2b of the Trustee material. Ms. Agner also provided a brief explanation of the appendix for the 2022-23 operating budget comparison shared in the board material.

Ms. Greeley shared that Dr. Miller provided a handout of the preliminary Fall 2022 Headcount and Student Credit Hour Report. The total headcount as of August 28th was 11,647. Final numbers will be available at end of day on September 2nd, which is WCU's designated Census date. The Fall freshman class is expected to be one of Western's largest, although overall enrollment is expected to be slightly down. This fall, there are roughly 4,000 students back on campus.

Ms. Greeley noted that Dr. Wargo reported the on-going progress of the plans for the Chancellor's Residence Events Renovation Project, which can be found in Tab D-3 of the Trustee material. The Chancellor's Residence Committee will work with the design firm, McMillan, Pazhdan, and Smith on final design finishes and with Facilities on final design and construction documents.

Ms. Greeley shared that the University Policy Updates can be found in Tab D-4 of the Trustee material.

Ms. Greeley shared that the Chancellor's Residence Condition Report and Report from the Annual Inspection Tour of Chancellor's Residence can be found in Tab D-5 of the Trustee material.

Ms. Greeley shared that the Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule can be found in Tab D-6 of the Trustee material.

Ms. Greeley shared that an Advancement update can be found in Tab D-7 of the Trustee material.

The Committee has one closed session item to be considered.

#### **REPORT OF FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Chair Roberts recognized Mr. Cooper to give the report of the Finance and Audit Committee.

The Finance and Audit Committee considered an action item, two discussion items, and one information items.

Mr. Cooper shared that the Finance and Audit committee heard from Mr. Byers, and he proposed the approval of Moore Building Renovation Construction Manager Selection. Mr. Byers explained that four firms were interviewed as finalists to serve as Construction Manager for the Moore Building Renovation project. He stated that all four finalists were outstanding candidates, and the committee selected James R. Vannoy & Sons Construction Company, Inc. from Jefferson, NC to recommend to the Board for approval and rated the others in the order presented in Tab E-4. The Finance and Audit committee recommended to the full board the approval of James R. Vannoy & Sons Construction Company, Inc., as the Moore Building Renovation Construction Manager, which can be found in Tab E-4 of the Trustee material. The motion comes from committee and does not require a second. The selection of James R. Vannoy & Sons Construction Company, Inc. as Moore Building Renovation Construction Manager was unanimously approved.

Mr. Cooper shared that the committee heard from Mr. Fowler, and he shared the IT Annual Report for 2021-22, which can be found in Tab E-2 of the Trustee material. Mr. Craig Fowler's presentation highlighted the global award received by the IT Help Desk -- the 2022 HDI Best Service and Support Organization. This is HDI's highest award. The award recognized WCU's achievements in customer satisfaction with Shift-Left. Mr. Fowler discussed the on-going challenges of adapting to the "new normal" that is being experienced in IT, including supply chain issues along with retraining and recruiting technical staff. In addition, the update summarized the ongoing architectural transition to subscription and cloud-based software and services; IT results for the past academic year; IT objectives for 2022-2023; performance metrics for the past year; and the technical currency for learning spaces, the data center, and networking.

Mr. Cooper shared that the committee heard from Mr. Browning, and he reported that the search for a new WCU Chief Audit Officer was successful. The University has hired Gary Malloy to be WCU's next Chief Audit Officer. Prior to Mr. Malloy's hire at WCU, he was the Internal Auditor at the Citadel. He shared that Mr. Malloy will start on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Cooper shared that Mr. Browning also informed the committee that the Office of Internal Audit is being incorporated into the Legal Counsel Office. Mr. Browning will manage the day-to-day operation of the audit function, which will include technical assistance, resource assistance, and budget management among other things. However, the Chief Audit Officer will continue to report to the Chancellor and to the Board about non-management functions such as the development of the yearly audit plan.

Mr. Cooper shared that the Capital Projects Statue Report can be found in Tab E-3 of the Trustee material.

The Committee had no closed session items.

#### **STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT INFORMATION REPORT**

Chair Roberts welcomed and thanked Ms. Estefany Gordillo-Rivas for her service as SGA President. Chair Roberts recognized Ms. Gordillo-Rivas to give the SGA Report. Ms. Gordillo-Rivas shared information on the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches. She shared two external updates. Ms. Gordillo-Rivas also provided UNC ASG updates. (SGA REPORT IS IN REPORT MATERIALS ON FILE).

#### **FACULTY SENATE INFORMATION REPORT**

Chair Roberts welcomed and thanked Dr. Livsey for her service as Faculty Senate Chair. Chair Roberts asked Dr. Livsey to give the Faculty Senate Report. Dr. Livsey shared her overarching goal to support Chancellor Brown's goal of re-engaging the campus community. Dr. Livsey shared old business including New Course Evaluations, Faculty Retention, New Faculty, and New Senators. Dr. Livsey shared Upcoming Faculty Senate Agenda Items: Honoring Our Promise. Dr. Livsey shared the Faculty Senate Website and Faculty Senators. She also shared other points of pride. (FACULTY SENATE REPORT IS IN REPORT MATERIALS ON FILE).

#### **STAFF SENATE INFORMATION REPORT**

Chair Roberts recognized and thanked Dr. Aspinwall for her service as Staff Senate Chair. Chair Roberts asked Dr. Aspinwall to give the Staff Senate Report. Dr. Aspinwall shared her appreciation for the opportunity to the Trustees for providing a report on quarterly activities of the WCU Staff Senate. Dr. Aspinwall thanked the Trustees for their leadership and continued support. Dr. Aspinwall shared the 2022-23 Senators and Executive Team members. Dr. Aspinwall provided a 2021-22 Recap and shared Staff Senate Initiatives for 2022-23. Dr. Aspinwall also shared the Staff Senate 2021-22 Annual Report. (STAFF SENATE REPORT IS IN REPORT MATERIALS ON FILE).

#### **ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INFORMATION REPORT**

Chair Roberts recognized and thanked President Allison Hinson for her service as Alumni Association President. Chair Roberts asked President Hinson to give the Alumni Association Report. President Hinson gave an update on the WCU Alumni Association Board of Directors Activities and Initiatives. (ALUMNI ASSOCIATION REPORT IS IN REPORT MATERIALS ON FILE.)

#### **CLOSED SESSION**

Chair Roberts asked for a motion to go into closed session. Ms. Greeley made a motion to go into closed session to prevent the disclosure of privileged or confidential information, or information not considered a public record pursuant to § NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(2) and (a)(3) as described on the September 02, 2022,

Board of Trustees of Western Carolina University Closed Session Agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Crocker. The motion was unanimously approved by the board.

Chair Roberts asked Chancellor Brown, Mr. Browning, Dr. Wargo, and Ms. Raynor to remain for the closed session item. Discussion followed on the Closed Session agenda item.

#### **RESUMPTION OF OPEN SESSION**

Chair Roberts asked for a motion to return to Open Session. Mr. Kinney made the motion to return to Open Session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Brawley. The board unanimously approved to return to Open Session.

Chair Roberts provided an overview of the agenda and BOT meeting. Chair Roberts reminded Trustees of the Steam Plant Ribbon Cutting Ceremony scheduled for October 21, 2022, and football games.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Roberts asked for a motion and a second to adjourn. Motion to adjourn from Mr. Cooper and a second from Mr. Crocker. The motion was unanimously approved by board.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.