

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
September 3, 2021
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 3, 2021 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, and Ms. Rebecca Hart.

Present – Faculty and staff of Western Carolina University:

Chancellor Kelli R. Brown; Dr. Richard Starnes, Provost; Ms. Deidre Hopkins, Staff Senate Chair; Dr. Laura Wright, Faculty Senate Chair; Mr. Neal Andrews, 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. Alex Gary, Athletics Director; Dr. Cory Causby, Associate Vice Chancellor of Human Resources and Payroll; Ms. Karen Woody, Budget Officer; Ms. Lisa Gaetano, Internal Auditor; Mr. Benny Smith, Executive Director of Communications and Public Relations; and Ms. Jessica Woods, Assistant Secretary to the Board of Trustees.

WELCOME

Chair Roberts welcomed Governor Terry Hutchens, the Faculty and Staff Senate Chairs, Alumni Association President, as well as staff and faculty attending the meeting, via Zoom and joining, via LiveStream. Chair Roberts welcomed Jake Robinson, Joe Crocker, and Bill Brawley for their first regular session BOT meeting.

ROLL CALL

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

SWEARING-IN OF NEW AND REAPPOINTED TRUSTEES

Mr. Bob Roberts, Ms. Haden Boliek, and Mr. Cooper were sworn-in to serve on the Board of Trustees as reappointments, by Ms. Woods. Mr. Jake Robinson, Mr. Bill Brawley, and Mr. Joe Crocker were sworn-in to serve on the Board of Trustees by Ms. Woods. The swearing-in was for an in-person swearing-in and photo opportunity with Chancellor Brown.

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.”

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 4, 2021 Regular Session, Board of Trustees meeting (TAB B-1); minutes of the June 29, 2021 Special Called Meeting of the Board of Trustees (TAB B-2); minutes of the July 20, 2021 Special Called Meeting of the Board of Trustees (TAB B-3); and minutes of the August 3, 2021 Special Called Meeting of the Board of Trustees (TAB B-4). Mrs. Schlosser made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Brown 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 thanked the staff and faculty who have worked so hard to launch the fall semester, while adhering to all of the safety protocols due to the ongoing pandemic.

Chancellor Brown provided an update on the COVID-19 self-run and led vaccine clinic. She shared information on the COVID-19 protocols. She also shared information on the UNC System guidance to be vaccinated or subject to regular testing by October 1st.

Chancellor Brown provided an update on enrollment. She provided information on numerous efforts that are underway to positively impact fall 2022 enrollment, including CRM, NC Promise, Common App, waiver of application fees, diversity student recruitment, and HEERF funds, etc. Chancellor Brown shared that WCU has launched one new online program this fall and have two slated for next fall. She shared an update on graduate head count and credit hour enrollment.

Chancellor Brown provided an Advancement update. She shared that the development and alumni engagement staff were out on the road this summer meeting with willing and eager alumni and friends. She noted that freshman student send offs were scheduled in Asheville metro area, Gaston/Lincoln, Charlotte, Raleigh, Greensboro, Atlanta, and far Western NC. Chancellor Brown thanked the Board of Trustees for participating in the freshman send-offs, and especially to members Becky Brown, Rebecca Schlosser, and Kathy Greeley, for hosting these events in their homes. Chancellor Brown mentioned the second round of the Chancellor’s Tour will be launched with a full slate of on campus and online alumni and donor engagements.

Chancellor Brown noted that the campaign feasibility study is ending. She shared that partners at Capital Development Services completed donor and prospect interviews and alumni surveys. She shared that the board would hear the results at the November BOT Retreat.

Chancellor Brown shared a legislative update. She shared that the NC House proposed a 5% across the board raise for most of the faculty and staff in the budget. She shared that the budget is now in conference as the Senate, House, and Governor works out differences. She shared that both houses of the General Assembly have included all of WCU's remaining legislative priorities in their proposed budgets.

Chancellor Brown shared some University Accolades. She also shared that new rankings from US News and World Report will be released on September 13. Chancellor Brown thanked the faculty and staff, students, and trustees for a great academic year.

COMMENTS FROM BOG LIAISON

Chair Roberts welcomed and recognized Terry Hutchens, Board of Governors Liaison, to the meeting and remarks. Governor Hutchens extended his appreciation for serving as the WCU BOG Liaison. He shared his appreciation of the Apodaca Science Building. He shared that he looks forward to working with Western Carolina University.

COMMENTS FROM CHAIR

Chair Roberts thanked Chancellor Brown for her Chancellor's Report and Governor Hutchens for his BOG Report. Chair Roberts thanked the board for their confidence in him serving as the Chair of the Board. Chair Roberts reminded the board of their three (3) general fiduciary duties of Trustees: duty of care, duty of loyalty, and duty of obedience. He reminded the board of our seven (7) Strategic Directives. He mentioned that he would like to utilize some of the chair comment time in future meetings to feature trustees and their advocacy for WCU. Chair Roberts thanked Chancellor Brown and her leadership team for guiding the university to greater and greater heights. He reminded the Trustees of the UNC System Board of Trustees Workshop and 50th Anniversary Celebration on November 17-18 in Raleigh.

STRATEGIC PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

Chair Roberts welcomed and recognized Lily Tim Metz for the Strategic Plan Annual Report discussion. Discussion ensued on the Strategic Plan 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 reviewed a few discussion items.

Ms. Boliek shared that Dr. Starnes provided an update on the administrative searches for the Dean of the College of Engineering and Technology and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Success. The dean search committee composition is in process with the intention of seating a new dean July 1, 2022. The search for the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Success will begin later this fall semester.

Ms. Boliek shared that Dr. Starnes provided an update on the instruction plan for Fall semester 2021. We have returned to face-to-face instruction. A mask mandate began again in July, and requirements to get vaccinated or get tested mandates will begin September 15th.

Ms. Boliek noted that Dr. Starnes shared optimism about the budget. Once completed, he noted that WCU will begin implementation of the plan submitted by the Standing Committee on Faculty Salaries.

Ms. Boliek mentioned that Dr. Carolyn Callaghan presented information on Educational Outreach and distance education. WCU has experienced a 38% growth in distance students since 2014, making up

approximately 23% of our current student body. Dr. Callaghan reviewed the history of distance and the current landscape challenged by the growth of mega online university sites.

Ms. Boliek shared that Dean Kim Winter, College of Education and Allied Professions presented information on the Call MeMister Program. The goal of this program is to increase the pool of male individuals of color to teach in K-8 programs. The program provides a living learning community, a cohort model, a mentorship program, and professional development and career support.

Ms. Boliek shared that Dr. Causby provided information on the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Programming Initiatives and the University Resiliency/Well-being Opportunities for Faculty and Staff.

Dr. Starnes shared information on faculty appointments and administrative appointments in TAB C-8 of the Trustee materials.

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 Committee considered two action items, one discussion item, and five information items.

Mrs. Greeley shared that Mr. Browning presented the Proposed Resolution of the Board of Trustees of Western Carolina University to Amend and Restate Delegated Authority from the University of North Carolina Board of Governors (Proposed Resolution). He detailed the reason and described the layout for the Proposed Resolution. Mr. Browning then shared next steps. He shared that the deadline for the initial submission to the UNC System office is October 1st after which we will be provided feedback from the President. The deadline for the final submission to the Board of Governors is November 1st.

The Administration, Governance, and Trusteeship committee recommended to the full board the approval of the Resolution to Amend and Restate the Delegated Authority from the University of North Carolina Board of Governors. The motion comes from committee and does not require a second. The Resolution to Amend and Restate the Delegated Authority from the University of North Carolina Board of Governors was approved.

Mrs. Greeley shared that Mr. Monteith presented a report of the condition of the Chancellor's residence which can be found in the Board of Trustees material under TAB D-3. Items completed at the residence were listed by Mr. Monteith and Mr. Coleman Leopard.

Mrs. Greeley shared that Mr. Leopard summarized the annual inspection tour of the residence conducted on September 1, 2021 and listed interior projects which were completed in the residence as well as those in process. Next year, Mr. Leopard will provide the Chancellor's Residence Condition report on a bi-annual basis to the Board of Trustees.

Mrs. Greeley shared that Ms. Meredith Whitfield provided a legislative update. Ms. Whitfield shared information on the budget and shared that both versions contained key funding that Western, and the UNC System requested this year. She noted that the budget is now in conference where the House and Senate are working out their differences, after which negotiations with the Governor will soon follow.

Mrs. Greeley noted that Dr. Sam Miller reported that the official census numbers are not available at this time but reported we will see declines compared point in time last year. Final census numbers will be discussed at the November retreat.

Mrs. Greeley shared that Ms. Joyce Carpenter shared the Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule for 2021-2022 (Tab D-4) with the committee.

Mrs. Greeley shared that Ms. Jamie Raynor shared the Advancement update and answered questions from the committee. The report can be found in your Board materials under (TAB D-5).

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 discussed three action items and reviewed a couple discussion and informational items.

Mr. Cooper shared that Mr. Byers explained that the WCU campus water source is water drawn from the Tuckasegee River and treated in WCU's water plant. In doing so, WCU is regulated like any water provider. One of the requirements of a water provider is that they must prepare a water supply plan and get it approved every 5 years, like a municipality or other utility provider, by its governing body. Rather than bring this unusual item to the BOT for approval every 5 years, and since WCU only provides water to itself on-campus. The Finance and Audit committee recommended to the full board the approval of the water supply plan be delegated to the Chancellor (or his/her designee). The motion comes from committee and does not require a second. The water supply plan was approved.

Mr. Cooper shared that Mr. Byers explained that WCU has three leases for space at its Biltmore Park Instructional site in Asheville. One of those 3 leases expires next year and the process to put a new one in place has begun. As detailed in the Resolution provided in Tab E-3a in your Board materials, administration is seeking authority for a 2-year lease with a 5-year extension option. The reason for the initial 2 years is that the other two leases expire or are up for renewal option in 2 years. This will synchronize all 3. The Finance and Audit Committee recommended to the full board the approval of the resolution labeled Tab E-3a. The motion comes from committee and does not require a second. The resolution was approved.

Mr. Cooper shared that Mr. Byers explained that in the normal course of its business, the Highlands Biological Station enters in to lease agreements with groups who spend time conducting research and other activities at the Station. The Finance and Audit Committee recommended to the full board that authority for approving all leases at Highlands Biological Station be delegated to the Chancellor (or his/her designee) as presented in the Resolution in Tab E-3b. This motion comes from committee and does not require a second. The delegated authority was approved.

Mr. Cooper shared that Mr. Craig Fowler, Mr. Dan Berk, and Dr. Eli Collins-Brown presented the annual IT Update for 2020-2021. The presentation provided examples of WCU's continued implementation of key strategic systems, even during a pandemic year. This included replacing the Undergraduate and Graduate Admissions CRM systems and a new Learning Management System. In addition, Mr. Fowler summarized IT results for the past academic year, IT objectives for 2021-2022, performance metrics for the past year, and the technical currency for learning spaces, the data center, networking, and internet bandwidth capacity.

Mr. Cooper shared that an Internal Audit Update was provided by Ms. Lisa Gaetano. She updated the committee on the audit plan that ended on June 30, 2021. At this time, there are 18 completed engagements and 7 engagements in progress.

Mr. Cooper shared that a Capital Improvements update was provided for information in your Board materials in the section labeled Tab E-6.

FACULTY SENATE INFORMATION REPORT

Chair Roberts recognized Dr. Wright to give the Faculty Senate Report. Dr. Wright thanked the Trustees for their service to the University and shared her appreciation to work with Trustees for the academic year. Dr. Wright discussed and shared the Faculty Senators Guide. She provided an update on Faculty Senate meetings, Faculty Senates priorities, and shared a report on faculty salaries. . (FACULTY SENATE REPORT IS IN REPORT MATERIALS ON FILE).

STAFF SENATE INFORMATION REPORT

Chair Roberts recognized Ms. Hopkins to give the Staff Senate Report. Ms. Deidre shared her appreciation for the opportunity to the Trustees for providing a report on quarterly activities of the WCU Staff Senate. Ms. Hopkins thanked the Trustees for their ongoing support of WCU staff members. Ms. Hopkins gave an update and provided materials on the Staff Senate Roster and Representation, 2020-2021 Recap, Staff Senate Initiatives for 2021-2022, and focus areas. Ms. Hopkins shared the Staff Senate 2020-2021 Annual Report. Ms. Hopkins also shared the list of 2021-2022 Staff Senators. (STAFF SENATE REPORT IS IN REPORT MATERIALS ON FILE).

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INFORMATION REPORT

Chair Roberts recognized President Neal Andrews to give the Alumni Association Report. President Andrews gave an update on the WCU Alumni Association Board of Directors Activities and Initiatives. He shared information on the Quarterly Alumni Association Board of Directors Meeting, WCU Alumni Scholarship Fund, Alumni Board Participation Rate, Freshman Student Send-Offs, Chancellors Tour, and New Alumni Board Orientation. He also shared that the WCU Alumni Association Board of Directors will assist in participating and promoting the following engagement opportunities offered by the Office of Alumni Engagement: Class of 2020 Celebration, Legacy Pining Ceremony, and 2021 Homecoming. He shared other engagement opportunities offered by the WCU Office of Alumni Engagement. (ALUMNI ASSOCIATION REPORT IS IN REPORT MATERIALS ON FILE.)

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT INFORMATION REPORT

Chair Roberts recognized Ms. Rebecca Hart to give the SGA Report. Ms. Hart shared information on the Judicial, Legislative, and Executive branches. She shared the goals/next steps for SGA. She shared external update. Ms. Hart also provided information on the UNCASG activities and Platform updates. (SGA 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 within the meaning of the NC Public Records Act to: Prevent the disclosure of information considered exempt from public disclosure pursuant to § NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(3) as described on the September 03, 2021 Board of Trustees of Western Carolina University Closed Session Agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kinney. The motion was unanimously approved by the board.

Chair Kinney asked Chancellor Brown and Mr. Browning to remain for the closed session items. Discussion followed on the Closed Session Agenda Items.

RESUMPTION OF OPEN SESSION

Chair Roberts asked for a motion to return to Open Session. Mrs. Schlosser made the motion to return to Open Session. The motion was seconded by Ms. Brown. The board unanimously approved to return to Open Session.

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 11:20 am.