

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY  
June 4, 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 June 4, 2021 in Room 501A of the H.F.R. Administration Building. Chair Kinney called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

**ATTENDANCE**

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

Present from the Board: Chair Bryant Kinney, Mrs. Haden Boliek, Mrs. Becky Brown; Mr. Casey Cooper, Ms. Joyce Dugan, Mrs. Kathy Greeley, Mr. Tim Haskett, Mr. Ken Hughes, Mr. John Lupoli, Mr. Kenny Messer, Mr. Bob Roberts, Mrs. Rebecca Schlosser, and Ms. Rebecca Hart,

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

Chancellor Kelli R. Brown; Dr. Richard Starnes, Provost; Mr. Ben Pendry, Staff Senate Chair; Dr. Kadence Otto, 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, Interim 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. Also present were Ms. Brenda Kinney and Mr. Jake Robinson.

**WELCOME**

Chair Kinney 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.

**SWEARING-IN OF SGA PRESIDENT**

Ms. Rebecca Hart was sworn-in to serve on the Board of Trustees, as SGA President, by Ms. Woods.

**ETHICS STATEMENT**

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

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Kinney asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2021 Regular Session, Board of Trustees meeting (TAB B-1); minutes of the April 13, 2021 Special Called Meeting of the Board of Trustees (TAB B-2); and minutes of the April 27, 2021 Special Called Meeting of the Board of Trustees (TAB B-3). Mrs. Schlosser made a motion to approve the minutes. Mrs. Greedy 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 Trustees for their hard work to close out a successful spring semester and in-person commencement activities.

Chancellor Brown mentioned that WCU recognized the history of the Cherokee with an official land acknowledgement for the first time, and it was a beautiful ceremony and gift exchange at the 2021 Commencement. Chancellor Brown noted that faculty and staff will begin moving into the new Apodaca Science Building in July and our grand opening will be on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, following the Board of Trustees meeting.

Chancellor Brown thanked everyone who worked and volunteered with the WCU Regional Vaccination Clinic, specifically faculty, staff and students who stepped up to lend a hand. Chancellor Brown shared that WCU's self-run and led vaccine clinic administered over 15,000 shots to residents throughout Western North Carolina. Among the UNC system clinics, we administered a fifth of the shots to the North Carolina population of vaccinated people. Chancellor Brown extended another thank you to the University Health Services staff.

Chancellor Brown provided an update on Governor Cooper's executive order. She mentioned that considering his order, WCU lifted all capacity limits and physical distancing requirements. She noted that WCU plans to maintain mask requirements in all instructional settings, the Cat-Tran, and University Health Center. She noted that masks are optional for those who are fully vaccinated in other locations on campus. She noted that University Leadership will continue to encourage mask wearing at events and in situations where people are gathered.

Chancellor Brown shared that the Board of Governors met last week and Chancellors were able to attend in person for the first time since the pandemic began. She shared that she greatly enjoyed being able to spend some time with her colleagues and meeting new Board of Governors members and introducing them to the great work of WCU. Chancellor Brown noted that at the meeting, the UNC System Board of Governors voted to extend a one-year waiver for standardized test requirements for admissions, including SAT and ACT, because of the ongoing cancellations and disruptions to testing availability due to COVID-19. She reminded Trustees that last summer, the board waived the testing requirement for students applying for admission through 2021. Chancellor Brown noted that WCU will continue to be test-optional for the 2022-23 academic year and students can still submit SAT and/or ACT scores with their applications.

Chancellor Brown provided an update on Enrollment. She shared that credit hours for Summer 2021 exceeded last summer's enrollment numbers by almost 1,500 student credit hours. She shared that summer programming is returning to a closer to normal state and all summer academic programs are running. Chancellor Brown noted that the Academic Success Program and Catamount Gap Program returned this summer, and they will bring 150 new students to campus for an early start. She mentioned that demand is strong for Graduate, distance and undergraduate transfer admissions for Fall semester, but healthy point-in-time numbers in these areas would not likely fully offset the potential for headcount and semester-credit hour decreases that WCU could see in continuing, residential undergraduate enrollment and entering first-year student enrollment. Chancellor Brown shared that continuing uncertainty among college-going high school graduates is fueling the possible decline. She also noted that based upon enrollment patterns, trendlines, commit levels, and orientation counts, total headcount enrollment likely will fall below the fall 2020 enrollment total of 12,243. Chancellor Brown shared that admissions, academic student success, and University Communications and Marketing staff are actively connecting with prospective, admitted, and even committed students to reduce any potential attrition rates and promote an exciting, back to normal fall semester.

Chancellor Brown shared an update on HEERF Funds. She shared that in the past year, WCU has awarded \$8,694,711 in HEERF funds directly to students. The remaining HEERF I and II funds were used for strengthening institution funds including reimbursement to housing and dining. Chancellor Brown noted that this summer WCU will receive HEERF III funds that will be aligned with the following priorities: Public Health, Affordability, Student Success, IT Security, and Access. She noted that at least \$13,111,602, possibly more, will be in direct distribution to students.

Chancellor Brown provided an Advancement update. She shared that the development and alumni engagement staff are out on the road this summer meeting with willing and eager alumni and friends. She noted that freshman student send offs are scheduled across the southeast, and WCU will launch the Chancellor's Tour again in July with stops in Raleigh, Greensboro, Asheville, Charlotte, Atlanta, Cherokee, and Sylva from now through the fall. Chancellor Brown also mentioned that WCU has a full slate of on-campus alumni and donor engagement planned for the remainder of 2021. This will kick off with today's Madison Legacy Society and Cullowhee Society donors and the inaugural planting ceremony and luncheon for our top donors who have left the WCU Foundation in their estate plans or who have given \$100,000 or more over their lifetime. Chancellor Brown mentioned that Capital Development Services will discuss the campaign feasibility study during the meeting. Chancellor Brown thanked the committee for their partnership and guidance, which includes Board of Trustees Bryant Kinney and Kenny Messer.

Chancellor Brown shared that she participated in her first legislative reception in Raleigh last week. She noted that several of our Board of Trustee members were there, along with other university leadership. Chancellor Brown thanked the Trustees for their participation in the event. Chancellor Brown thanked Meredith Whitfield and the Special Events Staff, Christy Ashe and Amber McKendrick for their hard work on this event. Chancellor Brown mentioned that she was able to meet with legislators in Raleigh.

Chancellor Brown shared some University Accolades. Chancellor Brown shared that WCU is in Business North Carolina's Power List 2021, a recently published compilation of the state's most influential leaders. Chancellor Brown noted that WCU awarded 689 degrees over one weekend and five events at our May commencement. She extended her appreciation to the staff and faculty who made this possible. Chancellor Brown noted that the Business and Technology Development Center continued to step up and help businesses across our region gain access to nearly \$14 million in capital infusion and secure 55 Small Business Administration loans. The College of Education and Allied Professions partnered with Clemson to start a Call Me MISTER program. Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Models is designed to increase the pool of available male teachers of color in our region and across the

state. Chancellor Brown also noted that there are over 3,500 WCU graduates employed in North Carolina public schools and that 345 of them are principals and school administrators, and 2,864 of them are classroom teachers. The remaining 359 are in other service areas including guidance counselors, speech pathologists, social services and more.

Chancellor Brown shared that Kristen Revis received first place honors and third place for Sophia Spangler, finance students in the College of Business, in a national collegiate financial planning competition held this past spring in St. Louis. She shared that a recent graduate of the Brinson Honors College, Alexis Moser, gained a national fellowship award from Alpha Lambda Delta to continue with graduate studies in speech-language pathology at East Tennessee State University this fall.

Chancellor Brown thanked Mr. Ben Pendry for his service as staff senate chair. She presented Mr. Pendry with an appreciation gift. Chancellor Brown thanked Dr. Kadence Otto for her service as faculty senate chair. She presented Dr. Otto with an appreciation gift. Chancellor Brown also recognized the outgoing Chair, Mr. Bryant Kinney. She shared that Mr. Kinney will still be here, at WCU, as a member of the Board for two more years and that we will continue to benefit his experience, but his leadership will be missed. She presented Mr. Kinney with an appreciation gift.

#### **COMMENTS FROM CHAIR BRYANT KINNEY**

Chair Kinney thanked Chancellor Brown for her Chancellor's Report. Chair Kinney welcomed Mr. Jake Robinson and mentioned that he will be joining the Board of Trustees on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Chair Kinney congratulated all of the 2021 graduates and shared his appreciation to the leadership, faculty, and staff who worked hard to make the Commencement ceremonies successful. Chair Kinney extended his thanks to each of the Trustees for their service and support during his tenure as chair of the board. Chair Kinney noted that the Chancellor Brown and her leadership team have worked hard and quickly to fill major positions, including Provost Starnes; Athletics Director, Alex Gary; deans; faculty; staff; coaches; and the Director of Athletic Bands.

Chair Kinney noted the recent census data that reported one half of North Carolina's adult population was not born in the state. He noted that WCU must continue to do all we can to promote our university and deliver on its mission to this region and the state. He shared that the post-pandemic economy will require more technologically advanced businesses and more highly skilled employees. Chair Kinney noted that WCU must provide an environment and the degrees that build the workforce of tomorrow while also focusing on keeping student costs and debt as low as possible.

Chair Kinney thanked Mr. John Lupoli for his service to the board. Chair Kinney recognized Mrs. Greeley for some words of thanks for Mr. Lupoli, on behalf of the board. She presented him with an appreciation gift.

Chair Kinney thanked Ms. Joyce Dugan for her service to the board. Chair Kinney recognized Mr. Casey Cooper for some words of thanks for Ms. Dugan, on behalf of the board. He presented her with an appreciation gift.

Chair Kinney thanked Mr. Kenny Messer for his service to the board. Chair Kinney recognized Mr. Roberts for some words of thanks for Mr. Messer, on behalf of the board. He presented him with an appreciation gift.

Chair Kinney noted that this was his last scheduled board meeting as chairman and extended his thanks, specifically to Dr. Melissa Wargo, Mr. Shea Browning, Ms. Jessica Woods, and Trustees. He thanked the Trustees for their continued focus, leadership, and service to the board.

### **CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

Chair Kinney welcomed and recognized Lily Skok Bunch, Senior Counsel and Allan Burrows, Capital Development President for the Capital Development presentation. Discussion ensued on the Campaign Feasibility Study. The study launched in March and will continue through the fall.

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

Chair Kinney recognized Ms. Lupoli to give the report of the Academic Affairs and Personnel Committee. The Academic Affairs and Personnel Committee reviewed a few discussion and informational items.

Mr. Lupoli shared that Dr. Starnes provided an update on the administrative search for the Vice Chancellor for Student Success. He shared that they moved forward with an interim internal appointment, Dr. Jeff Lawson, who previously served as chair of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science. He noted that a national search will begin this summer.

Mr. Lupoli shared that Dr. Starnes Dr. Starnes provided an update on the Standing Committee on Faculty Salaries as presented in Tab C-2 of the Trustee materials. The committee is made up of faculty members from each college, Dr. Causby and the chair of the Faculty Senate. The committee has proposed a multi-pronged approach to address our long-standing salary issues which will begin implementation in the fall.

Mr. Lupoli shared that Dr. Starnes provided an update on planning for Fall semester 2021, as presented in Tab C-3 of the Trustee materials. We are fully underway with preparation to return campus activities to as normal as possible while still preserving flexibility. The usual campus fall activities will take place but may be modified logistically in some ways.

Mr. Lupoli shared that Dr. Causby provided an overview of the UNC System 2020 SHRA Compensation Review which provides a snapshot of the UNC System workforce as of December 2020, as presented in Tab C-4 of the Trustee materials. The original “scorecard” was created in 2017, developed by the UNC System Office to serve as a way to provide salary comparisons across all system institutions. The tool is used by the System Office to update interested groups such as the UNC Board of Governors and UNC Staff Assembly of the overall status and market competitiveness of SHRA salaries. He noted that a primary comparison point utilized in the review is the overall percentage of SHRA employees below 90% of their respective target market rate. For 2020, 59.11% of WCU’s SHRA workforce was below this benchmark.

Dr. Starnes shared information on faculty appointments, administrative appointments, and athletic appointments in TAB C-5 of the Trustee materials.

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

Chair Kinney recognized Mr. Roberts to give the report of the Administration, Governance, and Trusteeship Committee. The Administration, Governance and Trusteeship Committee discussed one action item and a few discussion and informational items.

Chair Roberts shared that Dean Kim Winter presented the revised WCU Strategic Plan for approval. Dean Winter reviewed the seven strategic directions which include 1) Academic Excellence, 2) Student Experience, 3) Inclusive Excellence, 4) Regional & Community Engagement, 5) Employee Excellence, 6) Infrastructure Investment, and 7) Vision Advancement. The WCU Strategic Plan with updates can be found in TAB D-2a & 2b of the Trustee materials. The Administration, Governance, and Trusteeship committee recommended to the full board the approval of the WCU Strategic Plan including the seven strategic directions and their associated goals, and allow the strategic planning committee the flexibility to make changes, as needed, to the strategic initiatives. The motion comes from committee and does not require a second. The WCU Strategic Plan was approved.

Chair Roberts mentioned that Ms. Meredith Whitfield provided an update on the legislative reception held last week at the Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh. The reception was well attended by members of the legislature and some of our Trustees. WCU was the first legislative reception of the pandemic to be held and we're proud to be leading the way. A video which illustrated the need for a comprehensive renovation of the Moore building was presented at the Raleigh reception.

Chair Roberts noted that Ms. Whitfield reported that the budget process is not moving along in the timeframe everyone had hoped due to a spending guidelines disagreement between the House and Senate. It's hoped that they can come to a resolution and then come to an agreement with the Governor.

Chair Roberts shared that Mr. Rich Price provided an update on WCU's economic development activities and economic conditions across the WNC region and shared that he also gave a run-down of the progress to date on developing strategies related to regional initiatives.

Ms. Carpenter shared the Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule for 2021-2022, as presented in Tab D-3 of the Trustee materials, with the committee. Please note the important dates of the regular Trustee meetings as well as the date for the Board of Trustee Special Called meeting on July 15, 2021. Chancellor Brown noted the Board of Governor's meeting in April 2022 will be held at WCU.

Mrs. Raynor shared the FY21 Advancement Report, as presented in Tab D-4 of the Trustee materials. Mrs. Raynor answered questions from the committee.

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

Chair Kinney recognized Mr. Messer to give the report of the Finance and Audit Committee. The Finance and Audit Committee discussed two action items and reviewed a couple discussion and informational items.

Mr. Messer shared that the committee heard from Ivy Gibson on the Compliance and Enterprise Risk Management Plan, as presented in Tab E-2 of the Trustee materials. Ms. Ivy Gibson walked the committee through the plan and spoke on the five top risks General Counsel submitted to the UNC System Office.

Mr. Messer shared that the committee heard from Lisa Gaetano who presented the proposed audit plan for July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2021. The plan is included in Tab E-3 of the Trustee materials. The finance and audit committee recommended the approval of the two-year internal audit plan as presented. The motion comes from committee and does not require a second. The Audit Plan was unanimously approved.

Mr. Messer shared that Mr. Mike Byers reported that WCU has launched an update to the Campus Master Plan. Many things have been accomplished and many things have changed since the development of the 2014 Campus Master Plan. Mr. Messer shared that H.E.W.V. will be leading the development of the 2021 update. Concepts will be shared with the Board of Trustees at the November Retreat. The goal will be to

have a final Updated Master Plan to present to the board for consideration for approval at the December meeting.

Mr. Messer shared that a Capital Improvements Update was provided for information as presented in Tab E-4 of the Trustee materials. Mr. Byers and Mr. Walker presented requested updates on the Apodaca Science Building, the Lower Campus Residence Halls, and the Parking Deck.

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

Chair Kinney recognized Dr. Otto to give the Faculty Senate Report. Dr. Otto thanked the Trustees for their service to the University. She welcomed and congratulated the newest Trustee, Mr. Jake Robison. She shared that Dr. Laura Wright, Professor of English, begins her term as Chair effective July 1<sup>st</sup>. Dr. Otto reported on collaborative campus work, provided an Academic Policy and Review council update, shared information on Collegial Review and Faculty Affairs Councils. Dr. Otto also shared the list of 2020-21 Faculty Senate Resolutions. Dr. Otto also noted faculty and staff compensation issues in her report. (FACULTY SENATE REPORT IS IN REPORT MATERIALS ON FILE).

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

Chair Kinney recognized Mr. Pendry to give the Staff Senate Report. Mr. Pendry shared his appreciation for his term as Staff Senate Chair and the opportunity to the Trustees for providing a report on quarterly activities of the WCU Staff Senate. Mr. Pendry thanked the Trustees for their ongoing support of WCU staff members. Mr. Pendry gave an update and provided materials on newly elected Senators, departing Senators, “Question of the Month”, Professional Development, UNC Staff Assembly, and UCLUB Silent Auction. (STAFF SENATE REPORT IS IN REPORT MATERIALS ON FILE).

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

Chair Kinney recognized President Neal Andrews to give the Alumni Association Report. President Andrews gave an update on the Alumni Board General Election, WCU Alumni Scholarship Fund, Alumni Board Participation Rate, Alumni Club Scholarship Learning Session, May 2021 Commencement. President Andrews 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” Freshman Student Send-Offs, New Alumni Board Orientation, Class of 2020 Celebration, Legacy Pining Ceremony, and 2021 Homecoming. (ALUMNI ASSOCIATION REPORT IS IN REPORT MATERIALS ON FILE.)

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

Chair Kinney welcomed and recognized Ms. Rebecca Hart to give the SGA Report. Ms. Hart shared information on the Judicial and Executive branches. She shared the goals/next steps for the updated engage with documents, safety walk, governing document review, plan Week of Welcome events for the fall semester, and networking with campus administration. Ms. Hart also provided information on the UNCASG activities and Platform updates. (SGA REPORT IS IN REPORT MATERIALS ON FILE).

#### **CLOSED SESSION**

Chair Kinney asked for a motion to go into closed session. Mr. Roberts 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 132-6.1 (c); § NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(1); and § NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(3) as described on the June 04, 2021 Board of Trustees of Western Carolina University Closed Session Agenda. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Brown. 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 Kinney asked for a motion to return to Open Session. Mr. Messer made the motion to return to Open Session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lupoli. The board unanimously approved to return to Open Session.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Kinney asked for a motion and a second to adjourn. Motion to adjourn from Ms. Hart and a second from Mr. Haskett. The motion was unanimously approved by board.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.