

Proposed Meeting Minutes

March 14, 2024

The Western Michigan University Board of Trustees (BOT) Formal Session was called to order by Chair Pro Tempore Lynn Chen-Zhang at 11:19 AM on *Thursday, March 14, 2024*. The selection of a Chair Pro Tempore was led by General Counsel Keith Hahn and necessary with both the chair and vice chair unable to engage for the meeting. A motion to approve Trustee Lynn Chen-Zhang as Chair Pro Tempore was made by Trustee James Liggins Jr., with a second by Trustee Kara Wood, and passed unanimously.

The meeting was conducted in a mixed modality with participants both attending in person in the Heritage Hall Ballroom or joining through Zoom, a virtual platform. The meeting 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, March 13th*.

Presiding in person were Chair Pro Tempore Lynn Chen-Zhang along with Trustees Kelly Burris, James Liggins Jr., and Kara Wood. Trustees Jon Hoadley and Lisa Williams engaged virtually through Zoom. Chair Shelly Edgerton and Vice Chair Alan Turfe made prior arrangements to be absent.

A motion to accept the *March 14, 2024 BOT agenda* was made by Trustee Kelly Burris with a second by Trustee Kara Wood. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion to accept the minutes as exhibited and with a noted correction from the *January 25, 2024 Annual Meeting* was made by Trustee Kelly Burris, with a second by Trustee Kara Wood. The motion passed unanimously.

Remarks were provided by Chair Pro Tempore Lynn Chen-Zhang – *Attachment A*, followed by remarks from President Edward Montgomery – *Attachment B*.

Faculty Senate President Sarah Summy and Western Student Association President Melissa Powers 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 introduced Dr. Lauren Foley, Assistant Professor of Political Science and Director of the Capital Intern Program along with undergraduate student Madalyn Rockwell, who presented *Cultivating a Leader: WMU Student's Journey in the Capital Intern Program*.

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

As Action Items, Chair Pro Tempore Lynn Chen-Zhang presented the Consent Items for review.

A motion to approve the Consent Items was made by Trustee Kelly Burris, with a second from Trustee Kara Wood. The BOT unanimously approved the following Consent Items as exhibited: A. Liquor License – Multiple Events; B. Curriculum Proposals; C. Personnel Report; D. Annuity and Life Income Funds Performance Report; and E. Operating Cash Investment Performance Report.

There was no indicated interest in anyone addressing the Board in **General Public Comments**.

The BOT meeting ended at 12:09PM following a **motion to adjourn** made by Trustee Kelly Burris with a second by Trustee Kara Wood, and unanimous approval.

Respectfully submitted,



Kahler B. Schuemann, Ph.D.
Chief of Staff and Secretary to the Board of Trustees
Western Michigan University

ATTACHMENT A

WMU Board of Trustees Chair Pro Tempore Chen-Zhang's Remarks March 14, 2024

Good morning, everyone, and thank you for attending the March 14 WMU Board of Trustees meeting. It is my pleasure to preside over today's meeting in the absence of our esteemed board chair, Shelly Edgerton. I'm grateful to each of you for taking time out of your busy schedules to be here in person and online.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to a special guest in the audience. We are honored to have Trustee Emeritus George Franklin with us. Trustee Emeritus Franklin served on the WMU Board of Trustees from 1989 to 2001, appointed twice and by governors from both sides of the aisle, James Blanchard and John Engler. During his tenure, George worked as vice president of government relations at Kellogg Company.

Today, Trustee Emeritus Franklin, the author of several books, including his latest, "She Talked Like a Millionaire, Slept in a Parking Garage and Fooled Nearly Everyone," is on campus to be featured in our latest We Talk program.

At 3 p.m. in the student center ballroom A, he will join Wall Street Journal reporter Jon Kamp in a discussion about mental illness and homelessness and how these issues hit close to George's family, particularly his sister. If you have the time, please join him and Jon Kamp for this important event.

Special guest and alumnus Kalamazoo Mayor David Anderson is also on the panel. We thank Trustee Emeritus Franklin for his service as a board member, and we look forward to hearing from him later today. We appreciate the Office of Government Relations for organizing this discussion and for leading the We Talk program. [pause for a second applause]

As we gather here today for our formal board meeting, I am delighted to be amongst each of you who brings your invaluable expertise to our shared vision of academic excellence at Western Michigan University.

At this time, I would like to take a moment to call your attention to an upcoming event of significance for two board members—and the full board. At the end of March, Trustees Liggins and Williams will have the honor of representing us at the Association of Governing Board's 2024 National Conference on Trusteeship in Boston. This prestigious gathering serves as a vital platform for sharing insights, best practices and innovative strategies in higher education governance.

It's worth noting that some of our board members had the privilege of attending last year, further enhancing our University's engagement and involvement in shaping the future of higher education. By taking part in these conferences, we're modeling the importance of lifelong learning, which we hold dear as an academic institution.

Trustees Williams and Liggins are seasoned professionals who have and do serve on boards, and we all have that same shared vision and we value lifelong learning. So, thank you, trustees, for taking time out of your busy schedules to make this conference a priority.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of students and alumni, led by Dr. Fritz Allhoff, Department of Philosophy professor, journeying across the country for the Alaska Tax Program.

This year, 10 students and alumni dedicated their time and talent to helping residents with their tax filings. This endeavor exemplifies experiential education at its finest, offering students a unique opportunity to make a tangible difference in the lives of others while gaining valuable hands-on experience. WMU completed some 450 tax returns—that's the most our group has ever completed.

This initiative is a vital economic force within the Alaskan region. Spanning across 8 university partnerships and reaching more than 150 villages, it yields over \$5 million in economic benefits for rural Alaskans. We extend appreciation to our Broncos for serving in these Alaskan communities.

Special thanks to all those across campus who continuously support the program, including the College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Philosophy, the Haworth College of Business, Department of Accountancy, the Medical Humanities Workgroup, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and alumnus Matt Bahleda.

As we forge ahead, building and shaping Bronco history, I wanted to express my excitement in the piece of Western history being brought to new light. I am referencing Mr. Albert White, the African American bricklayer masonry and entrepreneur who is responsible for building the foundation of Heritage Hall.

Mr. Albert White's narrative continues to develop chapter after chapter. The University paid tribute to his pivotal contribution to laying the groundwork for WMU last fall, and as a board, we are overjoyed that Mr. White will remain an integral part of Western's heritage with the celebration of a spring event.

Honoring the University's commitment to diversity and inclusion, we will celebrate with the unveiling of a permanent wall display during a ceremony at 2 p.m. April 19 on the first floor right here in Heritage Hall, illustrating Mr. White's enduring legacy as a cornerstone of Bronco excellence.

Thank you to all involved in this project, including University Advancement; Lisa Garcia, assistant vice president of Community Partnerships; the Walker Institute; the College of Education and Human Development and Facilities Management.

We take great pride in preserving Mr. White's role at Western, aiming to retell his story that our Bronco children will embrace, cherish and pass along to their children.

Finally, on March 1, I had the privilege of delivering personal reflections during a memorial service commemorating the life of our beloved Dr. Ming Li, the late dean of the College of Education and Human Development from 2013 to 2022. The gathering took place outside Sangren Hall, where an Oregon Trail Maple tree and a plaque now stand to remember Dr. Li's legacy.

We will be forever grateful for his leadership and visionary approach to higher education, as it played a pivotal role in elevating Western Michigan University to unprecedented levels of student success.

The foundation that Dr. Li laid during his tenure continues to serve as our guiding framework. He was always energetic, enthusiastic and held an endless passion for discussing education. He loved the college, the University and our students, and I will always cherish the value he brought to our university community.

I believe we were drawn to Ming because of the positive energy he exuded with every conversation. We were honored to commemorate the tree and plaque with his wife present, Wan Chen, finance analyst in the College of Health and Human Services.

Special thanks to President Montgomery, University Advancement and the Timothy Light Center for Chinese Studies for organizing the ceremony.

Now, let us turn our attention to today's business. On today's agenda, President Montgomery will introduce Dr. Lauren Foley, assistant professor in the Department of Political Science and director of the Capital Intern Program, to discuss the impact the internship program has had on students since its inception and how it is an exemplar of Experience Driven Learning.

Many Broncos have walked the hallways of our State Capitol shadowing state lawmakers, engaging in policymaking or securing internships in local government offices and organizations. Several of our alumni who were once capital interns have made careers in politics and emerged as leaders of civic organizations, illustrating Western's reputation as a top 100 best college for future leaders.

Under action items today, several items are under consideration in consent, among them being liquor license approvals for three upcoming events this year, including the annual Medieval Congress May 9-11; an outdoor concert at Miller Plaza June 22; and the College of Aviation's annual Hall of Honor Induction ceremony at the Aviation Education Center on November 8.

We also have several curriculum proposals to consider, including the addition of a Master of Science in manufacturing engineering and the creation of graduate certificates in aviation administration and Global Leadership and Learning.

Thank you to the Graduate Studies Council of the Faculty Senate for their thorough work in bringing these proposals forward. Their diligence assists us in broadening our academic offerings and underscores the University's commitment to student success.

ATTACHMENT B

WMU Board of Trustees President Montgomery's Remarks March 14, 2024

Thank you, Trustee Chen-Zhang, and welcome back to the presiding chair's seat today.

Welcome back from spring recess! As Trustee Chen-Zhang mentioned the vibrant spring-like weather, it brings to mind the vibrancy that our current and prospective students infuse into campus life.

We have several Future Bronco Day events coming up, including this Friday, which means groups of prospective students and families will be touring campus. It's not uncommon for visitors to remark on the friendliness and beauty of WMU. I want to express my deepest gratitude to our faculty and staff for the hospitality they consistently demonstrate, and I'd like to give a special shout-out to our AFSCME colleagues who in addition diligently maintain and beautify our grounds. Your hard work does not go unnoticed and is greatly appreciated.

As we welcome new Broncos to our community, this Friday during the annual Presidential Scholars Convocation, we will recognize top seniors as they close this chapter of their educational journeys.

Each year, faculty members nominate students who have demonstrated exceptional efforts in their studies, and it is truly an honor to come together and celebrate their academic achievements. Faculty guidance, mentorship and dedication have played a pivotal role in shaping these students, who in turn go on to do great things with their WMU education.

Several 2023 Presidential Scholars, for example, are already soaring in their communities right here in Michigan—alumna Zahira Sanchez is an environmental engineer at Billerud paper mill in Escanaba; alumnus John Goheen is working as an aerospace processing engineer at Triple, Inc. in Troy; and alumna Logan West is the nutrition and health programs manager at the South Michigan Food Bank.

Hearing their success, we anticipate many similar strides from our 2024 Presidential Scholars as these star students pursue their purpose and meaningful careers.

Exciting WMU news just in: President Biden has signed a series of bills implementing various federal department budgets for the current Fiscal Year 24. Included in these bills was \$2.25 million dollars championed by Senator Gary Peters for Project CleanMI, a research proposal led by Principal Investigator Dr. Mert Atilhan, [Aaahh-Till-Hawn] associate professor of Chemical and Paper Engineering. [Dr. Atilhan said he will be present in the audience today]

Project CleanMI aims to address CO₂ emissions in Michigan by implementing direct air capture technology and establishing a network of pipelines to transport captured CO₂ to underground storage sites, specifically salt caverns. By implementing this technology AND capturing approximately 15% of emissions in the State of Michigan, local air quality will improve.

We're elated that, after months of patience and advocacy on Capitol Hill in DC, the Office of Government Relations worked diligently with Senator Peters' office to see this project across the finish line! This is certainly a win for Western as it aligns with our key priority of sustainability and addresses the University's strategic efforts to achieve carbon neutrality as outlined in our 2022-32 Strategic Plan.

While Dr. Atilhan's lead role involves coordinating the project's overall direction and ensuring alignment with the goal to significantly reduce CO2 emissions in Michigan, he is supported by a few WMU faculty members serving on this magnificent research team, including:

Dr. Autumn Haagsma, assistant director of the Michigan Geological Survey and director of the Michigan Repository for Research and Education; Dr. Kecheng Li, chair and professor of Chemical and Paper Engineering and Dr. Qingliu Wu, associate professor of Chemical and Paper Engineering.

We congratulate and thank them for their invaluable contributions to this research project.

Special thanks to Trustee Kelly Burriss for being the keynote speaker at Tuesday's Presidential Leadership Series.

I initiated this event several years ago to provide students with opportunities to connect with leaders, be inspired by their stories and enhance their development as pre-professionals. Trustee Burriss delivered an encouraging message Tuesday evening. Thank you, Trustee Burriss for taking time out of your schedule to empower our students with your words of wisdom and expertise.

Continuing in the spirit of appreciation, we are drawing near to Dunbar Hall's reopening. This impressive capital project that began several years ago is now a refreshed state-of-the-art academic building providing students, faculty and staff with outstanding resources for learning, research and work.

Dunbar's reopening symbolizes institutional growth, progress, and commitment to excellence, enhancing Western's reputation as a school committed to providing a learning environment that meets students' contemporary needs.

The renovations of this academic building involved strategic planning for long-term sustainability, including energy-efficient construction and other green features including two living, vegetative roofs, which contribute to our efforts for a LEED Gold certified building and incorporating upgraded utility infrastructure to align with Western's sustainability mission.

This accomplishment sets us on a path to meet and exceed our goal of being top 3 in Michigan for student success. Again, thank you to all involved in the project and we look forward to celebrating at the grand reopening next month on April 25, a ceremony that will immediately follow the April board meeting.

I also have the pleasure of recognizing the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences' chapter of the Institute of Industrial and Systems Engineers for their outstanding achievements at the 2024 IISE Regional Conference at Ohio University. They brought home first and second place awards from two submitted entries in the technical paper competition.

Congratulations to first-place student winners Sebastian Wolf, Austin Losee and Abbie Meredith; and second-place winners Tessa Muday, Rachel Millett and Sam Ryzewicz. Kudos to Dr. Tim Greene, professor of industrial and entrepreneurial engineering and engineering management, who represented Western as a keynote speaker for the event. Congratulations to all.

We're extremely pleased that Western students are receiving broad recognition in various fields on campus! Our student radio station WIDR Students traveled to New York City to participate in the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System 2024 Conference, and they walked away with some hardware! The station was awarded Best Radio Drama, titled "Luna Rose" and Glen Dillon, Assistant Director of Student Media, received the Best Faculty Advisor award.

Congratulations to the WIDR team, heard every day on 89.1FM on campus and across the Kalamazoo community, for its extraordinary creativity bringing the community together through radio broadcasting. Their work at the station inside the student center represents a commitment to community building not only locally but across the global radio broadcast industry. Well done!

As evidenced by the accolades and accomplishments shared today, we are committed to providing a high-quality education and experiences to empower our students today and ultimately as professionals. We are also committed to affordability so students can access and take full advantage of the exceptional education Western offers.

University Libraries is an exemplar of those efforts. Paul Gallagher, the libraries' associate dean for Resources and Digital Strategies, shared an impressive presentation at the recent Faculty Senate meeting on the Open Educational Resources grant program, which has remarkably resulted in saving Western students \$1.3 million in textbook costs since 2019.

Ten rounds of grants have been awarded to WMU faculty and instructors to switch to free, high-quality online resources in 70 courses instead of using traditional, often more expensive textbooks.

The Open Educational Resources grant program underscores our commitment to academic excellence and the financial health and well-being of our students, so that all may learn. Thank you to Julie Garrison, dean of University Libraries, and her incredible team.

Finally, I'd like to congratulate our Women's Basketball team and Coach Shane Clipfell and his staff for their journey to the MAC Quarterfinals.

Despite a strong first half in the quarterfinal game against #1 Seed Toledo yesterday in Cleveland, they fell short in the end. This was their 35th appearance in the MAC Tournament—we congratulate them on a well-played season.

In the same spirit, we extend our best wishes to the Men's Basketball team this evening as they take on Ohio University in the MAC Men's Basketball Quarterfinal Tournament in Cleveland at 6:30. This marks their first appearance in the MAC tournament since 2019-20, and it's their first time reaching Cleveland since the 2016-17 season.

Under the leadership of Coach Dwayne Stephens, the team has shown tremendous strength, growth, grit and outstanding play.

If you missed the team's buzzer-beater against Ball State on March 2, we've got the 40-second clip here today for you to enjoy! This final play undoubtedly will go down in Bronco history—it was played repeatedly on national broadcasts and online. Do we have that video cued up, Jacob? [video plays]