

MINUTES
WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY AT PARKERSBURG
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
April 8, 2020

A regular meeting of the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Board of Governors was held on Wednesday April 8, 2020, via Zoom Video Conferencing, beginning at 3:15 p.m. Board members present were: Donna Smith, Steve Hardman, Joe Oliverio, Sam Winans, Jeff Matheny, Jason Landers, John Denbigh, JP Hushion, Chris Cunningham, JB Skidmore, and Miranda Reed. Others present included Dr. Chris Gilmer and Brady Whipkey.

Guests present included administrators, faculty and staff.

1. Call to Order

Ms. Smith, Chair of the WVU at Parkersburg Board of Governors, called the meeting to order.

2. Roll Call

Roll Call was taken by Brady Whipkey, Chief of Staff to the President and Secretary to the Board of Governors, noting that a quorum was present.

3. President's Report

President Gilmer delivered the following report: President Woodrow Wilson said: "America is not anything if it consists of each of us. It is only something if it consists of all of us."

Crisis is known to bring out the best or the worst in each of us and in communities as a whole, and you will be proud and not surprised to learn that the COVID-19 pandemic is bringing out the very best in the West Virginia University at Parkersburg family. As President Wilson said, none of us alone would have the capacity to keep the University moving forward productively, but when you combine all of our talents and skills with our collective will to persevere for our students and our colleagues, we have everything we need to become an even better West Virginia University at Parkersburg.

Since this meeting is unusual in both its format and the moment in time it represents, I will modify the usual content of this report. Many of the events on which I usually report have been cancelled or postponed, and I can truly say the great majority of leadership has revolved around managing during a time of crisis. It is, then, on our ongoing and successful response to that crisis that I will report.

I am happy to report the transition from conducting the educational and business affairs of the University from face-to-face to virtual has been fully and seamlessly completed. We are midway through the second week of this transition with no majors challenges reported, "major" defined as any problem for which we could not find a ready solution. No President could have been better supported by an executive leadership team or by a family of faculty, staff, and students, and to each of them collectively and individually, I say thank you. When I began compiling my list of people whose contributions and sacrifices are worthy of calling out by name, and when I asked the executive team to submit their lists of such people to me, it became clear that we would have to call the

names of every employee and every student not to overlook any unsung heroes, so I decided to offer my most sincere gratitude to the family rather than to the individuals who comprise it.

I would, however, like to read just one of many notes I have received during the past few weeks from people who are sharing their own gratitude, this one from student Sarina Morris in her own words: "I just want to take a minute and really brag about my professors and college this semester. I actually am pretty bummed that everything had to be moved online, because this semester has been my favorite. I have been blessed with great professors who have gone above and beyond to help us through this transition. My English professors could not have broken things down any easier, walked me through each step, spent their extra time doing audio Power Points, and have made things available sooner to fit with everyone's 'new normal' schedule. My history teacher has made mp3 audios, since we no longer get to have the lectures that I miss the most, so that we could still be as prepared as possible for our next exam, and has made it clear he is always available for ANYTHING, not just class instruction. My Education 300 teacher has gone ABOVE AND BEYOND in helping us all through our first experiences with lesson planning. Y'all, he has made individualized YouTube videos for each section, walking us through it all. It has been a life saver. I get texts and emails from the college offering students support and information. They made a Wi-Fi area for students without Wi-Fi so they do not have to worry about finding a way to do their courses, while staying safe in their car. Also my sister has never failed to help in answering any of my questions during this transition working for Student Services. We may 'just' be a small college in Parkersburg, but WVUP has rocked this tough transition. West Virginia University at Parkersburg."

For every person Sarina recognized, a dozen others worked behind the scenes to make these accomplishments possible. We remain WVU Parkersburg Proud indeed.

Related to the pandemic, I can report that we were the first institution in the area to host a COVID-19 expert panel, live on the Parkersburg campus and streamed live to the Jackson County campus, and held before social distancing protocols were in place. The region's leading infectious diseases physician, chief epidemiologist, and our own Chair of Nursing, Kathy Frum, answered questions and provided counsel to our community before any other such community gatherings occurred, demonstrating our concern for the health and safety of our students and employees. I also named a COVID-19 task force to advise me on major decisions and to oversee transitions required to continue operations. This task force will continue to meet throughout the crisis.

We enacted strict sanitation and social distancing protocols ahead of the curve and began preparing weeks ago for what seemed inevitable, that we would need to move all instructional and business functions of the University online for an undetermined period of time. The Offices of Instructional Technology (IT), Instructional Innovation, and Institutional Advancement, led by Doug Rhodes, Chris Fahey, and Dr. Torie Jackson, took the lead in building and communicating the infrastructure for such transition, but every office and every faculty member on both campuses had to learn a new normal in transitioning to the virtual infrastructure. We extended spring break for students by one week to allow faculty and staff to transition educational and business functions of the college online, and both classes and business functions began in this new format on

Monday, March 30, at which time all buildings on both campuses were closed to the public and all but “essential onsite personnel.” Buildings had been closed to the public a week prior. “Essential onsite personnel” is being defined very narrowly to greatly minimize the number of people entering any University buildings. Security has been expanded to 24 hours a day, seven days a week on the Parkersburg campus. Wi-Fi coverage was expanded into the parking lots from the buildings so that students, faculty or staff members without access to Wi-Fi at home can come and use campus-based free Wi-Fi in their automobiles with strict social distancing enforced by security.

Spring Commencement has been rescheduled for Saturday, August 8, 2020, with the possibility that it could again be postponed unless face-to-face gatherings have resumed and are considered entirely safe by medical authorities. We considered a virtual commencement, but since this event marks such an important milestone of accomplishment in the lives of our students and their families, we deemed a virtual commencement insufficient to celebrate their accomplishments. Some universities are combining spring and fall commencements, but we also decided against this option because we did not want May graduates to have to wait this long to celebrate their graduation.

At present, we aspire to return to face-to-face operations and instruction on Monday, May 4, but we recognize with each passing week that the likelihood of such an aspiration grows less likely. We have already restructured finals week as an additional week of instruction. It would be incredibly helpful to end the semester with one or two weeks of face-to-face instruction in such areas as welding and science labs which, despite the best efforts of faculty members and students, truly do not lend themselves to virtual instruction. We are, however, being as innovative as possible, locating virtual resources which simulate clinical rotations for our nursing students and which meet the minimal accreditation standards. If we are able to return to face-to-face instruction, even for one week, we can likely avoid a large number of “Incomplete” grades being awarded to students in our more hands-on programs, a highly desirable outcome. If we are not able to return to any face-to-face instruction this semester, quite a few students will receive grades of “Incomplete,” and we will begin trying to complete those credits in the summer term. Provost Chad Crumbaker is leading these efforts. We are also considering a pass/fail option which, if implemented, would allow students to choose a letter grade or a pass/fail grade in each course for the spring 2020 semester. At present, we do not intend to extend the spring 2020 semester, although we still retain the right to do so. At present, we plan to offer our full summer and fall 2020 course offerings in face-to-face format as scheduled, except for those courses originally planned to be taught online and which would continue as originally planned, but are prepared to transition all instruction to fully online as the trajectory of the pandemic dictates.

Communication is the key to success during this transition, and we are actively communicating with all constituents through multiple channels. We perfected new technology which allows us to send text messages to and receive text messages from students. Expected primarily to be one-way communication from the University to students in an attempt to stay connected, the first text message campaign yielded approximately 40 return texts from students in need of everything from mental health counseling to student services support to financial support. Kurt Klettner, our Executive Director of Student Support Services and College Counselor, has taken a leadership

role in following up with these students. We are responding to those needs while preparing follow-up texts, a preferred method of communication by our students. Additionally, we have been conducting community-wide, open Zoom meetings and Facebook Live sessions on a regular basis. Each of the vice presidents and I, in pairs of two, conducted the first three Facebook Live sessions, and follow-up live virtual sessions have included financial aid staff, IT and instructional support staff, admissions and recruitment staff, with more of these events planned. We also continue to communicate regularly through videos, social media, the website, telephone, and emails. All essential meetings of the University are being conducted by Zoom.

There is some good news in the midst of crisis. The CARES Stimulus Act passed by Congress and signed by the President of the United States includes higher education, and we expect in the range of \$2.1 million coming to WVU Parkersburg within the next few weeks, by far the largest amount awarded to any institution in West Virginia reporting to the WV Community and Technical College System and based on the fact that our full-time enrollment is the largest among all of these institutions. We are still waiting for a firm amount and for guidance and restrictions on how these funds can be expended, but we are told that there will be considerable flexibility to allow for the wide variety of local needs across the nation. We know that 50 percent of the funds will pass through directly to students in the form of mini-grants to help with such urgent needs as food, shelter, medical care, transportation, and childcare. The other 50 percent will be retained by each institution to help offset unexpected spending or decreases in revenue caused by the pandemic. The executive team and I, in consultation with other relevant staff, are already developing plans for how to use these funds to the greatest advantage of our students and the University as a whole, anticipating what the federal guidelines might include and, of course, deferring fully when they are received.

More good news comes from the area of recruitment. Just eight days into April, new applications for fall enrollment are up 24 percent over 2019, at 664 total new applications. It is also noteworthy that this comparison is made with less than one third of April 2020 compared to all of April 2019, and this is already the highest number of new applicants of any April for the past four years. Summer 2020 numbers are also looking good, at 220 compared to 197 April 2020 over April 2019, also comparing one week of April 2020 with the whole of April 2019. While these applicants must still be nurtured and converted to registrants, I commend Dr. Steven Smith and his team for producing amazing numbers during a time when they have not been able to recruit in the field or host students on our campuses, a testimony to the power of innovation.

The Strategic Recruitment Plan is still moving rapidly toward full adoption with three virtual forums planned to solicit stakeholder feedback in the near future, Thursday, April 9 at 11 a.m.; Tuesday, April 14 at 6 p.m.; and Thursday, April 16 at 11 a.m. The Governors and the full community, including the broader non-campus communities we serve, are invited to participate and to give feedback which will be incorporated into a final plan to be ready by the end of April 2020, leading us then into a broader strategic planning cycle built on the same model.

Finally, anticipating the need for healing and celebration, WVU Parkersburg will celebrate its 60th birthday in 2021. We will begin with a holiday kick-off in December 2020 and conclude with a community-wide birthday celebration, in conjunction with the

Chamber of Commerce, in December 2021, with many celebratory moments in between. To include broad representation of the communities we serve, I have asked the following people to Co-Chair the 60th Birthday Planning Committee: representing the Board of Governors, Karen Denbigh, wife of Governor John Denbigh; representing the Foundation Board, Annette Fehrenbacher; representing the community at large, Kiki Angelos; and representing the University both as the spouse of the President and as Director of Special Events and Projects, David Creel. The full committee will soon be appointed and begin its work to issue in a much-needed period of celebration and healing, and I thank the members in advance for their work. Madam Chair, with respect and appreciation to the Board and unless there are questions, this concludes my report.

4. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Regular Board meeting of March 11, 2020 were approved upon a motion by Mr. Denbigh, seconded by Mr. Skidmore.

5. Committee Reports

- Executive Committee

Chairman Smith reported that the Executive Committee met to discuss the President's contract. If resolution is approved it will be sent on to the CTC for legal to review by Friday, then the CTC Board will voted on at the June 11 meeting. Chairman Smith also appointed a nominating committee for the 2020-2021 Academic Year, asking Mr. Hushion to serve as chair, and Mr. Skidmore and Mr. Denbigh to serve as members. The committee will present their nominations at the next meeting.

6. Information Items

- Fiscal Update

Ms. Harris provided a detailed report on the budget summary for March 31, 2020. With review and discussion, Ms. Harris answered questions from the members.

7. Action Items

- Approval of Five-Year Program Reviews

Provost Crumbaker, presented to the Board the proposed resolution for approval of Five-Year Program Reviews for 2019-2020. Provost Crumbaker discussed that as a requirement of Title 135, Series 10 of the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education, Policy Regarding Program Review, WVU at Parkersburg has conducted an internal follow-up review of five programs this academic year in accordance with these procedures. The internal review consisted of a thorough review by the Outcomes Assessment Committee, an Academic Affairs standing committee, based on strict criteria. The possible recommendations fall into six categories for the programs under review:

- 1) Continuation of the program without specific action,
- 2) Continuation of the program with specific action;
- 3) Continuation of the program at a reduced level;
- 4) Identification of the program for further development;
- 5) Development of a cooperative program with another institution; or
- 6) Discontinuation of the program.

Provost Crumbaker then provided an overview of the programs.

After review and discussion, Mr. Winans moved to approve the following resolution:

Resolved, that the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Board of Governors approves the recommendations of the Outcomes Assessment Committee regarding program reviews for 2019-2020.

Mr. Landers seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- Approval of Funds Transfer from Reserves.

President Gilmer, and Executive Vice President Alice Harris, presented to the Board the proposed resolution for approval of funds transfer from reserves. The College has completed its five-year SRP. The Board has reviewed the plan with its primary goal of increasing full-time-equivalent enrollment by 11 percent over five years and thus, over time, adding a substantial new recurring funding base to the college's annual budget. Current annual budget will not cover these expenditures because they are beyond the scope of the College's current strategic plan, are part of the new SRP, and are multi-year in implementation. Only whatever portion of approved funding is needed will be moved from reserves. This resolution has been approved by consensus of the entire Executive Team of the college.

After review and discussion, Mr. Denbigh moved to approve the following resolution:

Resolved, that the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Board of Governors approves the proposed movement of up to \$750,000 from reserve funds to facilitate funding of the new Strategic Recruitment Plan (SRP) with the goal of further stabilizing and strategically increasing enrollment.

Mr. Winans seconded the motion. Motion passed.

8. **Executive Session**

Chairman Smith asked for a motion to move into Executive Session. Mr. Cunningham moved to adjourn to Executive Session. Mr. Landers seconded the motion. The motion passed and the Board moved into Executive Session, under the authority of WV Code §6-9A-4(b)-(2)(A) at approximately 4:06 p.m. to discuss President's contract. Chairman Smith announced that the Board would return to regular meeting at 4:30 p.m. Mr. Denbigh moved to return to regular session. Mr. Skidmore seconded the motion. Motion passed.

9. **Action Items**

- Approval of Proposed President's Contract Renewal

Donna Smith, Chair Board of Governors, presented to the Board the proposed resolution for approval of the proposed President's contract renewal. Chairman Smith reported that members of the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Board of Governors discussed the renewal of the President's contract during the Executive Session of the Board of Governors meeting. Board Chair, Donna Smith provided a recommendation to members present. Members are asked to approve the proposed contract as discussed. Upon approval by this Board of Governors, the proposed

contract will be sent to the West Virginia Community and Technical College System (WVCTCS) for final approval.

After review and discussion, Mr. Winans moved to approve the following resolution:

Resolved, That the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Board of Governors approves the renewal of the Proposed President's Contract; also granting the Chair the ability to make changes to the contract per the WVCTCS recommendations without coming back to the Board for further approval.

Mr. Skidmore seconded the motion. Motion passed.

10. Board Comments/Announcements

None

11. Next Meeting

June 10, 2020; Francis & Nina Phares Board Room or via zoom if necessary.

12. Adjournment

With no further business to be discussed, Chairman Smith, requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Winans moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Skidmore seconded. The regular meeting of the Board of Governors adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brady Whipkey
Chief of Staff to the President
Secretary to the Board of Governors

Donna Smith, Chair

Joe Oliverio, Secretary