

MINUTES  
WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY AT PARKERSBURG  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
June 10, 2020

A regular meeting of the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Board of Governors was held on Wednesday June 10, 2020, via Zoom Video Conferencing, beginning at 3:15 p.m. Board members present were: Donna Smith, Steve Hardman, 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:

The poet Robert Frost, known for economy of language, said this: "The best way out is always through." Well, I am hardly known for economy of language, but I cannot express my feelings about the COVID-19 pandemic and our response to it more eloquently than Frost's words. We are working our way through it day by day, and we hope that eventually we will emerge on the other side. While we are living within it, WVU Parkersburg continues to take precautions to protect the health and safety of those who learn and work here, even as we prepare to begin a phased reopening of all facilities.

It is currently our intention to begin classes face-to-face for the fall 2020 semester. Last week the West Virginia community and technical college presidents were reminded by the Chancellor that reopening of campus facilities is a local decision, and she advised discretion and caution as we move forward. In the near future, after further consultation with this Board, the University's executive team, and our COVID-19 task force, I will announce a tentative schedule for the phased reopening of our facilities. Even after that phased reopening, which will endeavor to follow all state and federal guidance received and our own estimation of public health concerns, the University will reserve the right to change course if and as the pandemic changes course. I have charged Provost Chad Crumbaker to work with the faculty and students to ensure that all faculty members and students are prepared to transition back to virtual instruction if that is required, and furthermore, we are also exploring the option of making all or most classes into hybrid classes for fall, part-time face-to-face and part-time virtual. At present, we are not adjusting the fall calendar in any way, but we reserve the right for students to complete online the short portion of the semester which falls after Thanksgiving break, should there be a resurgence of the pandemic.

As you know, the University has remained open for business, and summer school is proceeding through online instruction. Full-time equivalent Summer 2020 enrollment currently stands at 112 percent compared to summer 2019, and new student enrollment for Summer 2020 stands at 305 percent compared to summer 2020. In fairness, while the percentage growth of new students is exponential, it represents a small pool of actual students, nonetheless still a great accomplishment for our recruiting and retention teams considering the adverse recruiting and retention circumstances.

It is too soon to know whether summer will be a predictor of fall enrollment, but I certainly hope it will be. We are using all available measures to recruit new students and to retain existing ones. Total new student applications are up significantly for fall 2020. Total applications for May surpassed total applications for any of the four previous months of May. Still, for this success to be fully realized, we must admit and register these students and retain a large number of continuing students who have not yet registered for fall. WVU Parkersburg's students traditionally wait until mid-to-late summer to register for fall, so we are hopeful that the remainder of June, all of July, and early August will help us close the gap between where we are now and where we ended the fall 2019 semester. At this point during the summer, while I would wish we had already achieved level enrollment for fall, it would be atypical for us to have done so since so many students register closer to the start of the term. Progress toward fall enrollment is down at many institutions because of the pandemic, but you may trust we will do all within our power to ensure a robust class for fall 2020 at WVU Parkersburg. In an attempt to remove all possible barriers toward enrollment, we have made the decision not to implement any tuition increase for the fall 2020, spring 2021 terms. Even though we requested and this Board approved a five percent tuition increase if needed, we made the strategic decision not to impose any hardships on our students beyond those which the pandemic has already caused.

As Executive Vice President Alice Harris will explain to you in more detail later today, we will be ending the current fiscal year with a small budget surplus, and we will be proposing a balanced budget to this Board for the next fiscal year. This is no small accomplishment at an open enrollment, state-supported, tuition-driven public institution in the middle of a pandemic. We have built next year's budget on the most reliable numbers we have at our disposal and cautiously optimistic projections about fall and spring enrollment, but the pandemic gives us less confidence than usual about these projections. Still, we are very pleased with the balanced budgets and confident that we can withstand any course corrections which might be needed.

Due to the CARES Act stimulus funding received, we provided \$876,544 in grants ranging from \$650 to \$1,300 to 1,046 students. Heather Skidmore and Alice Harris, and all of their team, deserve our gratitude for working very hard to help create the most seamless award process possible, and Dr. Torie Jackson and her team deserve our gratitude for marketing that process. While we were delighted to award these significant funds to our students, many students were ruled ineligible for funding based on guidelines provided by the U.S. Department of Education. It is important to note that WVU Parkersburg provided this grant funding to every student who was deemed eligible, based on the guidelines. The University currently has more than \$900,000 in institutional stimulus funds for which we will be determining the best legitimate uses in the near future. Some of the funds will be used for technological upgrades, and some

will be used to fund the physical revamp of the current library space. There are many limitations on what this money can fund, so we will make good use of it while following the guidelines. We appreciate our elected officials who worked to ensure that higher education was included in the stimulus package.

Since I felt unable to allow a spring 2020 commencement ceremony to take place because of the pandemic, I was delighted to host a televised celebration of WVU Parkersburg's graduating class, as well as the graduating classes of the 11 feeder high schools throughout the Mid-Ohio Valley which feed most directly into the University. We were honored to recognize 265 WVUP graduates who received 289 credentials, and the all-star line-up included West Virginia's Governor Jim Justice and Senators Shelley Moore Capito and Joe Manchin, Chancellor Sarah Armstrong Tucker, Board of Governors Chair Donna Smith, incoming Foundation Board Chair Becky Deem, Ricky Riverhawk, two WVUP student speakers, student speakers from each of the 11 high schools, Chamber of Commerce President Jill Parsons, Tony Winner Lillias White, and other WVU Parkersburg administrators and faculty. We believe that a large group watched the televised broadcast on WTAP, which is scheduled to be televised locally again tonight at 7 p.m. on CBS and tomorrow night at 7 p.m. on FOX. The first broadcast appeared simultaneously on Facebook and YouTube with a Facebook reach of 7,160 people and growing. Shout out to everyone who worked on this project led by Dr. Torie Jackson, including Jared Bailey, David Creel, the entire marking team, and many others.

Dr. Jackson's team has also been quite busy putting together our first virtual press conference during which Chancellor Tucker, Chair Smith, and I welcomed a representative of the Arnold Foundation, members of the press, and many other guests to formally announce the ASCEND program, our replication of the City University of New York's award-winning retention model funded by a \$1.7 million gift to WVUP from the Arnold Foundation, the largest single foundation gift in the University's 60-year history. Provost Crumbaker is leading this effort for WVUP and is doing an exceptional job, supported by the new ASCEND Project Director, Jennifer Forster. In March, our students were first introduced to the Ricky Riverhawk Bot, a text message chatbot powered by artificial intelligence that checks in with them, encourages them, and connects them to helpful University resources. While connecting students to the right resources at the right time, the Bot is able to do something new: hear the voices of students in a sustainable and scalable way. A voluntary communication based on student interest, 2,522 students chose to receive communication from Ricky, a 99 percent opt-in rate. In the first 12 targeted interventions with students, Ricky received 2,000 texts. The first conversations were checking in with students about the impact of the pandemic, and more recent messages are encouraging them to register for fall. Ricky told 233 eligible students about the ASCEND program and encouraged them to apply; he texted 1,941 students who had not registered for classes and encouraged them to register. He identified 65 students who were struggling with the transition to online learning and told them about tele-counseling options and tutoring sessions and identified 43 students who felt emotional distress caused by the pandemic, referring them to the campus counselor. This month we end a marketing campaign that began in July 2019 and delivered 1,462,416 digital messages to the community through a collaboration with NCM, America's Movie Network. The industry click rate for banner ads is nine percent, and our rate is currently 38 percent. As for the a4 Media campaign

reaching out to youth ages 16-19 in the seven-county region, the click rate is high. The YouCanDoThis spot has a click rate double the national average, and so far the campaign has delivered 173,104 video ads along with 57,491 digital logo ads. As you can see, our marketing team has been very busy. It is also worth noting that the media clips document provided to you as part of your Board packet is more than 100 pages, and all of that publicity has been generated about dozens of worthy projects carried out and publicized in the middle of a pandemic and since your last meeting in April.

Under the direction of Senta Goudy, the Arts Collaborative of the MOV, funded by the Ross Foundation, began producing a virtual variety hour on May 8. Currently, five shows have aired online each Friday night with at least five more shows planned. Grammy winners and Motown legends have joined talented local artists giving the community the opportunity to enjoy quality arts programming online while so many of our local arts organizations have their doors temporarily closed due to the pandemic. Further, these variety shows are giving local artists the chance to have a creative outlet for their talents and to be showcased alongside national and international artists. Enoch Productions, Lori Ullman, David Creel, and others have worked with Senta on this project, and I especially want to recognize Madison Sayre, a student intern in our experiential learning program, who is producing all of the shows. So far, we have reached 7,594 arts patrons, locally and nationwide, and we are only halfway through the season. Senta, Michele Wilson, Rodney Parker, and others have joined me in leading the effort to get the farm back into service through our partnership with Mister Bee and its owner Mary Anne Ketelsen. I am pleased to announce, even though the spring weather has been very uncooperative, that we have a good stand of potatoes on 10 acres at the farm and will harvest our first crop this year. This partnership will be featured in the summer issue of *West Virginia Living* magazine.

Several virtual town hall meetings have been held with our community since you last met. Dr. Steve Smith and his team held three virtual town halls to unveil and receive comment on the final draft of the new Strategic Recruitment Plan (SRP) which was very well received by a large group of participants and now has been finalized for implementation beginning August 2020. The Vice Presidents and I held a campus-wide town hall to update the internal and external community on the pandemic, budget, enrollment, and other matters, receiving and answering many questions from a wide cross section of our stakeholders. Total engagement with the session is 3,770 and growing. Vice President Brady Whipkey and I met with Johnson Controls International and secured their commitment to provide us with a feasibility study for campus-based housing. The feasibility study is expected to be completed at no cost with a Johnson Controls team scheduled to make its next visit to the Parkersburg Campus later this month. Additionally, Brady is overseeing the library renovation which will result in a newly designed state-of-the-art learning commons bringing together most of our student support services in one central location. The project is in the advanced planning stage.

Many more activities and those implementing them with grace under pressure are worthy of being featured, but I will end by focusing our attention on the primary reason we are here—service to our students. While excellence in teaching and learning is happening across all divisions, earlier this week I received the following student comment from a nursing graduate who, I believe, speaks across disciplines for so many of her peers. She said: “I have loved this program! The instructors are extremely

helpful. It is obvious that they care about our success and that we are not just a number to them like you see with some other nursing programs. I feel as if this program has prepared me to be a great nurse. I feel like they have given us every component we need to be a great nurse and it is up to us to make it happen now!...Overall, I can't describe how great of a program I think this is! I would recommend anyone to go through this program."

Governors, in case we ever need reminding why we are here, that says it all and much more eloquently than I could have said it. I would like to personally express my gratitude to the Executive Team which has counseled and supported me without fail during this pandemic, as well as this Board and the entire University community for your support. Unless there are questions, Madam Chair, with respect to the Board, this concludes my report.

#### **4. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the Regular Board meeting of June 10, 2020 were approved upon a motion by Mr. Denbigh, seconded by Mr. Matheny.

#### **5. Committee Reports**

- Executive Committee

Chairman Smith reported that the Executive Committee met to discuss the Early Learning Center, COVID-19 Updates, WVU Parkersburg Foundation, Faculty Tenure, Enrollment, and Potential Candidates for Board Membership.

- Academic and Student Services Committee

Mr. Landers reported on summer and fall semester classes, retention: a student success strategy, WVUP Ascend Program, Early College Coordinator, Blackboard upgrades, Academic Support Services, and Workforce and Economic Development Updates.

- Administrative Services Committee

Mr. Hardman reported on updates finance and administration, purchasing and contracts, financial aid, information technology, renovations to facilities and campus, marketing material, alumni update, and Foundation updates.

- Nominating Committee

Mr. Hushion reported the Nominating Committee met to discuss the Slate of Officers for the 2020-2021 Academic Year and recommend the following:

- Chair – Donna Smith
- Vice Chair – Steve Hardman
- Secretary – Joe Oliverio

Chairman Smith requested a motion to approve the Slate of Officers as presented. Mr. Matheny motioned to approve the nominations as presented. Mr. Denbigh seconded the motion. Motion passed.

#### **6. Information Items**

- Fiscal Update

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

## 7. Action Items

- Approval of Revised MOU with Foundation

President Gilmer, presented to the Board the proposed resolution for approval of the revised MOU with the Foundation. President Gilmer discusses that Significant changes were made in 2019 to the Memorandum of Understanding between WVU Parkersburg and the WVU Parkersburg Foundation, and significant changes were made to the bylaws of the Foundation. After consideration, the Foundation requests that this Board ratify a new MOU with one additional substantive change: (1) that the Foundation's Board has the right to accept or to reject the University's Vice President of Institutional Advancement as the President and CEO of the Foundation. This change is requested to ensure appropriate autonomy of the Foundation. Should this option ever be invoked by the Foundation Board, the University would reserve the right to no longer make any financial contribution toward the employment of the Foundation's President and CEO.

It should be noted that the Foundation Board has expressed, formally and informally, its complete satisfaction with the current leadership of the Foundation, the University's Vice President of Institutional Advancement, and that it does not expect to make any change in current leadership. The revised MOU has been duly voted on and accepted by the Foundation Board, in consultation with the President of WVU Parkersburg, and the University's President takes no issue with the revision, asking for this Board's approval.

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

*Resolved*, that the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Board of Governors approves the revision of its existing Memorandum of Understanding with the WVU at Parkersburg Foundation.

Mr. Matheny seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- Approval of Five New Programs

Provost Crumbaker, presented to the Board the proposed resolution for approval of five new programs. Provost Crumbaker discussed Constellium, a company in our service district, wanted to partner with a school to provide degree options that would meet their workforce needs. The AAS Reliability and Maintenance Technology and the AAS Electrical Reliability and Maintenance programs will meet those needs, as well as provide training for other students. Constellium has acquired funds to provide full scholarships to about 20 students per year. This will benefit the college by improving enrollment and providing a direct link to a workforce need and job opportunities.

The CAS and AAS degrees in the Digital Media Production program were created based on employer needs and will prepare students for careers in areas of radio and

television production, live and studio recording of music and other programming and related careers utilizing digital media production.

The Special Education Multi-Categorical K-12 program emphasis addresses a critical need expressed by stakeholders in our service region. It is an addition to the existing K-6 Elementary Education degree for students seeking dual certification.

The attached programs of study have been approved by the College-Wide Curriculum Committee, the Provost, and the President.

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

*Resolved*, That the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Board of Governors approves the following programs: AAS Reliability and Maintenance Technology, AAS Electrical Reliability and Maintenance, CAS Digital Media Production, AAS Digital Media Production, Special Ed Dual Certification Multi-Cat k-12.

Mr. Landers seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- Approval to hold FY2020-2021 Tuition Rate at FY 2019-2020 levels  
Alice Harris, Executive Vice President of Finance and Administration, presented to the Board the proposed resolution for approval to hold the FY2020-2021 tuition rate at the FY2019-2020 level. VP Harris provided an overview of the 2019 rates.

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

*Resolved*, that the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Board of Governors recognizes the significant financial impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on our students. Therefore, we believe it is in the best interest of our students to hold tuition rates for the 2020-2021 academic year level with those approved in the prior academic year. We approve the submission of the following rates to the West Virginia Community & Technical College System for the 2020-2021 academic year.

Mr. Skidmore seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- 2020-2021 Budget  
Alice Harris, Executive Vice President of Finance and Administration, presented to the Board the proposed resolution for approval of the 2020-2021 budget. VP Harris discussed West Virginia University at Parkersburg (WVUP) is statutorily required to submit operating budget that has been reviewed and approved by the WVUP Board of Governors to the West Virginia Community and Technical College System. Therefore, the attached FY 21 operating budget for WVUP are presented for approval.

Due to currently unforeseeable future financial impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic, the University's budget may require revisions. If so, a revised budget will be presented to the Board of Governor's at a future meeting for your consideration and approval.

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

*Resolved*, That the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Board of Governors approves a final budget for West Virginia University at Parkersburg for 2020-2021.

Mr. Matheny seconded the motion. Motion passed.

## **8. Consent Items**

Chairman Smith asked for a motion to approve the following consent items:

- Adoption of Policy F-64, Operation of Unmanned Aircraft Systems on Campus
- Revision of Policy B-08, Holidays
- Revision of Policy A-34, Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination
- Revision of Policy A-37, Board of Governors Meetings.

Ms. Reed made the motion to approve the consent items as presented. Mr. Skidmore seconded the motion. Motion passed.

## **9. Board Comments/Announcements**

None

## **10. Next Meeting**

August 12, 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. Skidmore moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Cunningham seconded. The regular meeting of the Board of Governors adjourned at 4:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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



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Donna Smith, Chair

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Joe Oliverio, Secretary