

MINUTES  
WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY AT PARKERSBURG  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
January 13, 2021

A regular meeting of the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Board of Governors was held on Wednesday January 13, 2021, 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, Rose Beebe, Kim McFee. 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:

Good afternoon. Helen Keller offered these simple, yet profound words: "Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much." It seems although she could not see or hear in the traditional ways that she saw and heard much more deeply than so many people who see only a path to division and hear only the sounds of sowing discord. May our nation and our university heed her words as we reflect on the events of last week and prepare for the days that are to come.

We have a very full and important agenda today, so I will keep my report shorter than usual, and, yes, I realize that none of you believes that until you see the promise fulfilled. While these meetings are appropriately open to the public, today I have invited a number of special guests to recognize their singular accomplishments in front of this Board. As always, their good work is representative of the good work of so many others. Vice President Torie Jackson and I recognize student Kaitlyn Thompson who has designed a new logo to be brought before this Board today. Vice President Brady Whipkey and I recognize Israel Smith, Sean Conger, and Vince Plummer who have built our new recording studio up to or above industry standards, saving us thousands of dollars in the process. Our IT division under the direction of Doug Anthony is putting in the data lines for the new equipment. I recognize Professors Billy Stone and Justin Bosley along with the entire business faculty who at my request mentored a team of students led by Brianna Luther and Kenneth Mason which also saved us thousands of dollars by researching and writing a feasibility study on campus housing rivaling in quality any study that we could have commissioned from a vendor. I will be sharing the results of their work broadly with the community in the coming weeks. Finally, in recognition of their singular academic accomplishments and as an investment in the entire faculty body, Provost Crumbaker and I recognize Professors Jeff Holland,

ReBecca Tucker, Dave Thompson, and Aaron Crites who we will be recommending today to this Board for awards of tenure. I believe that Vice Presidents Whipkey and Jackson are prepared to give you a virtual tour in photographs of the recording studio and also of the new learning commons we are creating in the former library space, and I look forward to our next face-to-face meeting when we can show you some of the many facilities upgrades we have undertaken during the pandemic.

Under the leadership of Vice President Jackson and with significant collaboration from Provost Crumbaker and many others, WVUP is the only institution in West Virginia and the only institution nationally of which I am aware that provided individualized commencement ceremonies to its students in December 2020. The investment of energy was so significant that it required 10 WVUP team members to devote 30 hours each in evening and weekend labor separately hosting individual families on the Parkersburg campus. This was Vice President Jackson's idea, and I will tell you that she had to take several passes at me with it before I finally approved it, so carefully have I insisted that we respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Her instincts were absolutely correct, and I am glad she advocated for her vision because almost 100 individual graduates and up to five members of their families enjoyed personal, socially-distanced commencement ceremonies. We reached 10,319 views and 3,516 engagements on FaceBook and YouTube with the culmination commencement ceremony which aired at the time our face-to-face commencement would usually have taken place. This we did safely and proactively in support of our students, and I am indeed very proud.

One FaceBook post about the list of graduates and President's and Dean's list scholars brought a reach of 13,424 with 66 shares and 4,911 engagements by grandmothers, fathers, uncles, cousins, and friends. That is the best publicity WVUP could ever get, and it is free. The post about the Division of Education offering a specialization in special education reached 8,537 people. The post about tuition-free classes for alumni reached 6,104 people for a total reach in the last 28 days of 44,251 on WVUP's FaceBook page. Way to go, institutional advancement!

Since your last meeting, our digital advertising campaign delivered almost 400,000 platform ads and more than 63,000 videos. More than 62,000 of those videos had a 100 percent watch completion rate. With a4 Media and our local cable companies, the effort to send messages to IP addresses of homes with residents aged 16-21 in our seven-county region delivered 575,488 videos, 466,691 ads through messenger, and 393,074 display ads on devices. This includes Pluto TV, Vizio, Filmrise, Discovery, Roku TV, Sling, Weather Channel, and more. And all I have to say is thank goodness for the Weather Channel so that I have at least heard of one of them. We delivered 249,927 streaming ads and 562 ads on radio, and for the football fans among us, you will be delighted to know we have booked 107 spots around the Super Bowl game, among the most coveted television ad spots of the year. Only two local companies have the opportunity for a Super Bowl ad on television, and we are one of them. Institutional Advancement is developing a new series of commercials for this opportunity. Additionally, we have new billboards. I draw your attention to the media clippings link sent to you as part of your Board materials with well more than 100 pages of publicity since your last meeting, and I am pleased to inform you that WVUP won first place in two categories of the *Parkersburg News and Sentinel's* recent annual "Best Of" competition.

I am especially pleased with our ChatBot results because 96 percent of our students have opted to receive text messages from Ricky the Riverhawk. The national company overseeing our ChatBot noted our perception rates are among the highest in the nation, and 93 percent of our students who responded indicate they are satisfied or highly satisfied with our handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. Those students noting a struggle indicated financial issues, drive/motivation, and workload as their primary concerns, and we are working to address those concerns with supplemental programming.

We hosted, with all events online, the National Institutes for Historically-Underserved Students which received excellent reviews locally and nationally with participants from more than 20 states and the District of Columbia. I will not spend more time on this program because I believe you are already well versed in all that it accomplished. In the interest of time, neither will I engage in my usual review of presidential speaking engagements and events, events hosted by WVUP, or similar activities other than to assure you they continue with diligence, persistence, and enthusiasm evening during the pandemic. I would like to recognize Dr. Jackson for her induction into the prestigious Young Guns Class for the State of West Virginia, a reflection of her professional accomplishments and community service. I would like to inform you also, because of the pandemic, that the WVUP 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday committee led by David Creel, Annette Fehrenbacher, and Kiki Angelos and supported by WVUP team members is changing gears somewhat since we will not be able to carry out face-to-face celebratory activities at least for the first part of our birthday year. Instead, they are launching this month the WVUP Gives Initiative which you will hear more about in the coming days. Each month, WVUP will spearhead a different kind of community giving in support of the communities which have given so much to us for 60 years. Instead of receiving gifts, it will be an inverted birthday experience in which the WVUP community gives back to the broader communities we serve, although I do still believe and hope that the pandemic will likely abate in time for us to properly celebrate our birthday in person in the second half of the year, and the team is already beginning to plan the biggest birthday party the Mid-Ohio Valley has ever seen for December 2021, more details to follow. Our conduits for celebration might have changed, but our spirit will not be broken.

You might wonder why I have not reported on COVID-19. Today I have asked Vice President Whipkey to update you on our COVID-19 response since he has been very capably coordinating it, and he will provide a thorough update shortly. I will say only what will not surprise you, that I determined it necessary for almost all of our instruction to remain online for the spring semester with some exceptions made for technical programs, labs, and clinical and field placements. All of this is subject to change depending on the trajectory of the pandemic.

Finally, I end today where I usually begin—enrollment. I extended registration by one week through the first week of classes which began on Monday, and our team is working to enroll and create payment plans for the maximum number of students possible to continue their educational dreams even during the pandemic. Nationally, community colleges have been hardest hit of any higher education sector with overall enrollment down 10 percent, incoming freshman enrollment down 20 percent, and

enrollment of historically-underserved students down 30 percent. It brings me joy to tell you that WVUP is solidly bucking that trend. Provost Crumbaker and the academic team have achieved almost 100 percent retention of continuing students spring 2021 compared to spring 2020, and this is utterly unheard of in higher education, even in good times. Vice President Steven Smith and his team you will recall achieved a 16 percent increase in new students for the fall 2020 semester and are level for the spring 2021 semester, an amazing accomplishment. Focusing only on our college student population, I am proud to report to you that we have achieved statistically level enrollment to start spring 2021, making us unique in a wonderful way among many colleges and universities nationwide. This has not happened by accident. The entire community has come together at my near-constant request, but I knew we could do it if we all followed Helen Keller's advice. Dr. Smith constantly reassures me: do the work and trust the process. Needless to say, I only excel at the first half of his counsel, so when the fulfillment of the process comes to pass, indeed it makes me WVUP Proud. Madam Chair, with respect to this Board and unless there are questions, that concludes my report.

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

Chairman Smith, stated the minutes from the Regular Board meeting of January 13, 2021 are submitted for review. With no corrections to be made, minutes are approved as submitted.

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

- Executive Committee

Chairman Smith reported that the Executive Committee met to discuss COVID-19, enrollment, financial aid, strategic plan spring semester, and special projects updates.

- Audit Committee

Mr. Landers reported on updates from the FY 2020 Audit, stating that it was a clean audit and would be presented to the full Board later in the meeting for approval.

- Academic and Student Services Committee

Mr. Oliverio reported on updates of academic affairs, blackboard, Fall 2020 student success indicators, academic support services, WVUP Ascend, Workforce and Economic Development updates on short term programs and business and industry, JCC updates and enrollment updates.

- Administrative Services Committee

Mr. Hardman reported on updates Foundation, alumni, marketing efforts, finance and administration, library renovation project, COVID-19, events, recording studio, store front project, abatement, activities wing foundation, information technology, position vacancies and new hires.

## 6. Information Items

- Fiscal Update  
VP Harris provided a detailed report on the budget summary as of month ending December 31, 2020. With review and discussion, Ms. Harris answered questions from the members.
- COVID-19 Update  
VP Whipkey provided a detailed report on the ongoing efforts of WVU Parkersburg to ensure the safety of the students, faculty and staff due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Topics discussed were the safety measures, tracking of positive cases, vaccination, and surveillance testing.

## 7. Action Items

- Approval of WVU at Parkersburg Fiscal Year 2020 Audit  
President Gilmer and Vice President Harris introduced members of Clifton Larson & Allen to the Board as they gave a presentation on the VY 2020 Audit. VP Harris then presented the proposed resolution to the Board for approval.

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 Audit report for fiscal year ending June 30, 2020 as submitted.

Mr. Oliverio seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- Approval of Honorary Degree  
President Gilmer presented to the Board the resolution for approval of honorary degree. Dr. Gilmer reported that for our Fall 2020 Virtual Commencement Dr. Jeff Sapp served as our Commencement Speaker. Dr. Gilmer provided a brief background on Dr. Sapp and his many accomplishments.

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

*Resolved*, that the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Board of Governors approves awarding the degree Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters to Dr. Jeff Sapp.

Mr. Landers seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- Approval of Strategic Plan  
President Gilmer presented to the Board the resolution for approval of the strategic plan. Dr. Gilmer discussed that WVUP's long-term strategic plan expired at the end of 2020. Due to the limitations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the university has not been able to fully engage every stakeholder in a traditional planning process. The College will develop a long-term strategic plan, in a more robust way and engage all stakeholders, as soon as the pandemic allows.

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 interim strategic plan to become immediately effective.

Mr. Oliverio seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- Approval of Awards of Tenure

President Gilmer and Provost Crumbaker presented to the Board the resolution for approval of awards of tenure. Dr. Gilmer and Provost Crumbaker provided an overview of the four faculty members and discussed the importance of tenure.

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

*Resolved*, that the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Board of Governors approves awarding tenure, presented in alphabetical order, to: Professor Aaron Crites, Professor Jeffrey Holland, Professor David Thompson, and Professor ReBecca Tucker.

Mr. Matheny seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- Approval of New WVUP Logo

VP Jackson presented to the Board the resolution for approval of a new WVUP logo. Dr. Jackson reported the logo being presented was designed by a student, Kaitlyn Thompson, while working through the experiential learning program. Dr. Jackson also discussed the importance of a logo as it pertains to branding and identity.

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

*Resolved*, that the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Board of Governors approves a new logo design for WVUP.

Mr. Denbigh seconded the motion. Motion passed.

## **8. Executive Session**

Chairman Smith asked for a motion to move into Executive Session under the authority of WV Code §6-9A-4(b)(12), to discuss confidential, legal and deliberative matters relating to the AVI Contract and the preliminary report from the US Department of Education audit. Mr. Landers moved to adjourn to Executive Session. Mr. Denbigh seconded the motion. The motion passed and the Board moved into Executive Session, at approximately 4:26 p.m. Chairman Smith requested President Gilmer and Executive Vice President Harris remain in Executive Session with the Board.

Chairman Smith announced the Board would return to regular meeting at 5:16 p.m. Mr. Oliverio moved to return to regular session. Mr. Landers seconded the motion. Motion passed.

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

None

**10. Next Meeting**

March 10, 2021; Francis & Nina Phares Board Room or via zoom if necessary.

**11. Adjournment**

With no further business to be discussed, Chairman Smith, requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Denbigh moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Hushion seconded. The regular meeting of the Board of Governors adjourned at 5:17 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