

MINUTES
WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY AT PARKERSBURG
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
March 10, 2021

A regular meeting of the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Board of Governors was held on Wednesday March 10, 2021, via Zoom Video Conferencing, beginning at 3:15 p.m. Board members present were: Donna Smith, Steve Hardman, Joe Oliverio, Jeff Matheny, Jason Landers, John Denbigh, JP Hushion, Stephanie McCoy, Ami Shaver, 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. Swearing in of New Board Member

Debbie Richards, Director of Policy and Compliance, conducted the swearing in of new Board member, Ami Shaver

3. 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.

4. President's Report

President Gilmer delivered the following report:

Good afternoon. March is Women's History Month, so it is appropriate for Sojourner Truth to remind us what her name also teaches us: "Truth is powerful, and it prevails." It is further appropriate to recognize the historical significance of Donna Smith who is the first woman to lead the WVUP Board of Governors in its 60-year history, and in a manner which honors Sojourner Truth and the generations of women who came before her. Donna is a wonderful thought partner to me in my role as President of WVUP, and a tireless advocate for all of you. We have several Women's History Month events planned including a "takeover" of our social media by female leaders of our community throughout the month of March.

In a moment of personal privilege, I would also like to thank Sam Winans for his great service to this institution. Sam was Chair of our Board when I was hired, and he gave me the complementary gifts of his wise counsel and the trust for me to implement my own vision. Sam saw a leader in me and gave me the space to grow into that leader, and I will be eternally grateful. I would also like to welcome Ami Shaver to this Board and to thank you all for your service. I believe no President in the world is more supported by a better Board of Governors.

Governors, it is my pleasure to introduce a few very special Riverhawks who deserve your recognition for their singular accomplishments since last you met. Student Jared Smith was recently selected to the 2021 All-USA Academic Team, one of only 20 students chosen nationwide from almost 1,500 applicants, based on the nomination by WVUP's Phi Theta Kappa advisers Marie Butler, Professor Andrew Rochus, Professor Andrew Walker, and me. Jared will be recognized by Phi Theta Kappa at the national convention of the American Association of Community Colleges, but because of COVID-19 restrictions the recognition will be held virtually. Jared has held important leadership positions with and for veterans in the Mid-Ohio Valley and will receive a \$5,000 scholarship for this latest honor. It is a rare accomplishment indeed, and equally worth noting is the humble response Jared posted when I congratulated him on Facebook. Jared wrote: "Thank you, Mr. President. It is an honor! Your staff, Darren Shearlock, Jonah Fox, Kim McFee, Professor Andrew Walker, and Marie Butler and the environment they created while I was visiting colleges to attend is why I am at WVUP! You have some amazing staff, their passion and care for the student put me at ease during an uneasy time. That's when I knew WVUP would be my choice. I am WVUP Proud! Thank you again, Mr. President." Governors, Jared is a leader among leaders. We thank him for his service to this nation and to WVUP.

Our students are also talented artistically, and the second year of WVUP's Got Talent, held this year virtually, brought out a wide range of artists from painters and photographers to spoken word artists, comedians, writers, and musicians. Student Olivia Kinder brought home the top prize. Over 600 People's Choice Awards were cast online in addition to the votes of the judges. A pre-marketing social media post featuring Olivia had a reach of 6,893 with 1,465 engagements and 39 shares. The live show had a reach of 2,900 with 1,492 engagements. The announcement of the winner had a reach of 3,434. Congratulations, Olivia, for taking top honors and to all of our wonderful contestants, and thanks to Samantha Suggs who led this effort, supported by our terrific host Professor Andrew Walker and Dr. Steven Smith, Dr. Torie Jackson, Elaina Segsworth, and Professor Logan Mace who joined me as judges. We also thank the marketing team who worked hard on this event.

Governors, as you know, I apologize to no one for believing in WVUP's ability to compete statewide and nationally and to win. Last year, we competed for the first time in the national Educational Advertising Awards contest, bringing home five awards. Well, this year, we set the bar higher and were recently notified that our team won seven national awards in the magazine, newspaper, television, outdoor advertising, and COVID-19 response categories. For the second year in a row, we won more awards than any other college or university in West Virginia. Under the leadership of Dr. Torie Jackson, Torie and I would like to recognize and to thank student interns James Dobbs, Sarah Weeks, and Joseph Whipkey, along with recent graduate Brooke Buchanan and staff members Rebecca Rhodes, Jared Bailey, and Olivia Reeder. You will perhaps remember that I created shock in some corners when I announced early on that I was turning the marketing of the university over to our students through an experiential learning program. Well, these awards are proof

that a man who has celebrated several 49th birthdays does not need to be crafting marketing messages for a target audience 18-25 years old, but that fortunately he had the good sense to get out of the way of a talented group of student leaders and their mentors. Job well done.

WVUP recently awarded approximately \$1.2 million in funds directly to eligible students through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) and Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act to assist with expenses related to COVID-19. WVUP proactively chose to add a significant portion of its institutional share to increase the pool granted to 1,424 students. The college's Pell-eligible students received \$1,100 each, and students who are non-Pell-eligible, but still eligible for these funds, received \$500 each. This is in addition to the May 2020 allotment that awarded \$876,544 to 1,046 students. WVUP is retaining approximately \$1 million of its institutional share in reserve until we complete the budget for the next fiscal year and assess fall enrollment, but will consider a second allotment to students if funds are available later in the year. In other good news for our students, Executive Vice President Alice Harris and I will request later in this meeting your permission not to increase tuition for the upcoming academic year, judging that our other budgetary resources will be sufficient to operate the college without deficit and judging that raising tuition during the pandemic would exacerbate an already-existing significant challenge to educational attainment for our students. EVP Harris and I would like to recognize Heather Skidmore and Jeanie Jones for their hard work getting emergency grants out to students.

In February, Dr. Steven Smith and the OPEN Task Force took the leadership role in presenting two excellent Black History Month programs, the first featuring an interview with Dr. Smith conducted by student Sedonie Beckford. That virtual segment had a reach of 4,408 with 753 engagements and 26 shares. In partnership with the Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department and Coplin Health Systems, WVUP has allowed a currently unused building on our Parkersburg campus to serve as a site for public COVID-19 vaccination clinics, resulting in thousands of community residents being vaccinated at no significant risk to the WVUP community. EVP Harris and I would like to recognize Jeannine Ratliffe and Cody Irick who worked to get the facility ready for the vaccination clinics. Approximately 135 WVUP employees were vaccinated as volunteers through the state program providing vaccinations to higher education employees, and 13 additional employees have requested the vaccine through a recent expansion providing vaccines to all volunteer employees 40 and older. Vice President Brady Whipkey has capably led our vaccination efforts.

Supporting community service throughout the Mid-Ohio Valley and expansion of programs meeting community needs, I have joined the advisory board of the Substance Use Disorder Collaborative (SUDC) which is housed at WVUP on Market and supported by several community-based funders. Dean Senta Goudy and I were joined by community leaders to appear before the City of Parkersburg's Zoning Board and recently gained unanimous approval for a large electronic sign which will

be erected downtown to promote the activities of the dozen nonprofit members of the Arts Collaborative of the MOV, funded by the Ross Foundation, and Dean Michele Wilson is leading a work group which is exploring the feasibility of a new cosmetology program at WVUP, in partnership with the Wood County Public Schools and area business leaders. Our 60th Birthday Honorary Committee will meet with the planning committee led by David Creel later this week, and we will be participating in the local Easter Parade March 20 as part of the festivities. Additionally, the *Parkersburg News and Sentinel* will publish a special section of the newspaper devoted entirely to the 60th birthday later this spring. In other happenings, WVUP goes international in a new partnership being explored with the University of the Virgin Islands, a Historically-Black University located in St. Thomas and St. John in the Caribbean region. I created a student exchange program with UVI and Tougaloo College many years ago, and we are exploring a variety of possible joint ventures if anyone is even interested in dipping toes into the Caribbean Sea, and more important into an educational and cultural immersion.

Our marketing campaigns through a4 Media and Suddenlink released two new 15-second commercials similar to our Super Bowl commercial and information about our 60th Birthday. Our click-through rate increased by 23 percent meaning our ads are driving viewers to our website. The marketing team is working with the academic divisions to enhance academic content on the website and to provide more information to prospective students. They are also working on search engine optimization to increase our Google search ranking. When you search “college in Parkersburg, WV,” we have gone from being unranked, not showing up at all, to page 1, position 1. It will not surprise anyone that this is my favorite position. In our experiential learning program, students are now supporting community groups and building their portfolios by helping with the Very Spectacular Arts program through Artsbridge, creating content for Move More MOV, helping design a website for the WV Center for Civic Life, and assisting with social media for the college’s alumni association, career services, the Riverhawk Farm, and the Arts Collaborative. Up next for marketing, full release of our ChatBot on the website, Google virtual tour visits, and a WVUP app for your phones. Dr. Jackson and her team are staying busy.

The academic sector is also busy, having recently launched a new and improved Early Alert System to proactively reach students at risk of failing. Executive Vice President Chad Crumbaker and I would like to recognize Jeremy Starkey, Bob Boyter, and Dan Williamson for their leadership of this initiative. Through the diligent work of Dr. David Lancaster and his team, the elementary education program finalized a Memorandum of Understanding with Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College to create a 2+2 program that will allow Eastern’s students completing their associate degree in elementary education to complete the bachelor’s degree in elementary education at WVUP without leaving their homes. We worked to leverage the benefits of our Zoom Rooms to develop this program and hope to expand enrollment in other WVUP bachelor’s programs for WVCTCS students across the state. Over the past five years, we have seen significant growth

in the percentage of WVUP students completing their first college level math and English course in the first semester. Since fall 2015, the percentage has increased 61.6 percent in math, meaning that 67.5 percent of our students completed their first math course in fall 2020. The percentage completing their first English course in the first semester has increased 24 percent to 74.3 percent in fall 2020. I will now yield a moment of my time to EVP Crumbaker to provide a brief overview our highly successful ASCEND Program. You will recall we were one of only two colleges nationwide chosen to replicate the program in 2020. Then I will complete my remarks. I recognize and appreciate Chad's excellent leadership of this program.

Finally, Governors, I want to share an enrollment update. While we began the spring semester with statistically level enrollment of college-age students at 98 percent compared to spring 2020, a major accomplishment during the pandemic, we have lost more students than usual this semester. Despite the best efforts of our faculty and staff to retain students and despite the diligent efforts of students to persevere, we have lost about five percent of our starting enrollment, a higher percentage than usual. It is not difficult to understand why this is happening as the pandemic goes on longer than expected and takes a toll in lives lost, mental health and financial challenges, and emotional well-being of our students. While we must continue to actively protect the health and safety of our community in every way, we must also look for solutions which allow us to return to face-to-face instruction for our students and work assignments for our employees as quickly as safely possible. There is, however, a very good enrollment narrative. When you compare our fall term 2021 applications against a five-year average, we are up two percent in returning students. When you compare our summer term 2021 applications against a five-year average, total applications are up 45 percent overall, 39 percent in West Virginia, and 9 percent in Ohio. Applications from new freshmen are up 128 percent, and applications from other freshmen, those who have graduated high school for more than five years, are up 41 percent. New freshmen already registered for summer shows an increase of 125 percent by the same comparison, and other freshmen shows an increase of 36 percent for summer. Summer enrollment is early, reflects a small number of students so far, will continue to grow, and is the best current indicator we have of what final summer and fall enrollment might be like and a testimony to what hard work can produce, even in a pandemic. Congratulations to the enrollment management team and everyone who has adopted the "everyone is a recruiter mindset" in support of them. Next mindset: "Everyone is also a retainer."

Madam Chair, unless there are questions and with respect to the Board, this concludes my report.

5. Approval of Minutes

Chairman Smith, stated the minutes from the Regular Board meeting of March 10, 2021 are submitted for review. With no corrections to be made, minutes are approved as submitted.

6. **Committee Reports**

- Executive Committee
Chairman Smith reported that the Executive Committee met to discuss COVID-19, enrollment, fiscal update, personnel update, and the Riverhawk Farm.
- Academic and Student Services Committee
Mr. Oliverio reported on updates of academic affairs, office relocations, early alert system, 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, store front project, activity center foundation, room renovations, information technology, position vacancies and new hires.

7. **Information Items**

- Fiscal Update
VP Harris provided a detailed report on the budget summary as of month ending February 28, 2021. With review and discussion, Ms. Harris answered questions from the members.

8. **Action Items**

- Approval of Riverhawk Farm MOU
President Gilmer presented to the Board the resolution for approval to enter into memorandum of understanding regarding the Riverhawk Farm.

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

Resolved, that the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Board of Governors authorizes President Chris Gilmer to negotiate and implement a Memorandum of Understanding with the West Virginia Farmers Collaborative (WVFC) to partner with WVUP to enhance production and workforce development opportunities on the Riverhawk Farm.

Mr. Oliverio seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- Approval to hold FY2021-2022 Tuition Rate at FY 2020-2021 Levels
President Gilmer and VP Harris presented to the Board the resolution for approval to hold FY 2021-2022 tuition rate at the FY 2020-2021 levels.

After review and discussion, Mr. Oliverio 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 2021-2022 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 2021-2022 academic year.

Mr. Landers seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- Approval of FY 2021-2022 Fees

VP Harris presented to the Board the resolution for approval of FY 2021-2022 fees.

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

Resolved, that the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Board of Governors approve the fees recommended for the 2021-2022 academic year.

Ms. Shaver seconded the motion. Motion passed

- Approval of CST to AAS Surgical Technology Associate Degree Program Tuition Rate Request for 100% On-Line Programs

VP Harris presented to the Board for approval of the CST to AAS Surgical Technology Associate Degree Program tuition rate request for 100% on-line programs.

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

Resolved, that the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Board of Governors approves in-state tuition rates for all students who are enrolled in the WVUP CST to AAS Surgical Technology Associate Degree Program programs that are delivered 100% on-line.

Mr. Oliverio seconded the motion. Motion passed.

9. Executive Session

Chairman Smith asked for a motion to move into Executive Session under the authority of WV Code §6-9A-4-2A, to discuss President's evaluation as required by Title 135, Legislative Rule, Series 5, Employing and Evaluating Presidents. Mr. Denbigh moved to adjourn to Executive Session. Mr. Oliverio seconded the motion.

The motion passed and the Board moved into Executive Session, at approximately 4:15 p.m.

Chairman Smith announced the Board would return to regular meeting at 4:51 p.m. Mr. Oliverio moved to return to regular session. Mr. Denbigh seconded the motion. Motion passed.

10. Board Comments/Announcement

11. Next Meeting

April 14, 2021

12. Adjournment

With no further business to be discussed, Chairman Smith, requested a motion to adjourn. Ms. Shaver moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Oliverio seconded. The regular meeting of the Board of Governors adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Donna Smith, Chair

Joe Oliverio, Secretary