

MINUTES  
WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY AT PARKERSBURG  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
October 12, 2021

A regular meeting of the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Board of Governors was held on Tuesday October 12, 2021, in the Multipurpose Room of WVU Parkersburg and via Zoom Video Conferencing, beginning at 3:15 p.m. Board members present were: Steve Hardman, Joe Oliverio, JP Hushion, Donna Smith, Jeff Matheny, Jason Landers, John Denbigh, Ami Shaver, Rose Beebe, Kim McFee, and L.V. Hissem. Others present included Dr. Chris Gilmer and Brady Whipkey.

Guests present included administrators, faculty and staff.

**1. Call to Order**

Mr. Hardman, 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, Governors. Perhaps Mother Teresa says it best: "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples." Some of us here are old enough to remember Doris Day singing "Que Sera Sera," and for those who are not, I offer it as a Google challenge. "When I was just a little boy, I asked my mother, what will I be..." That's how the song goes. As an ambitious and restless child, kind viewers might have called me unselfish and less kind viewers might have called me proud, but I asked my own mother, "Mama, how can I be great?" She quickly redirected my thinking and said, "Baby, the only way to be great is first to try to be good, every day, even when you fail at it, and you will fail. Just try to be good, and let greatness work itself out one way or the other." These are wise words from wise women, and in a moment when the world needs a change, terrifying as change can sometimes be, perhaps something they said will arouse in you as it arouses in me a renewed commitment to change the things we can for the better.

Since your last meeting, Executive Vice President Alice Harris and I attended a statewide meeting on developing a reliable funding formula for higher education in West Virginia, and those conversations are expected to be taken up by the Legislature in their next session. The formula will likely be built on enrollment, credential and degree completion, service to underserved populations, workforce development, and other related factors. Vice President Brady Whipkey and I continue to participate on the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force to Align Workforce Development in West Virginia,

and I am chairing the subcommittee on employer engagement. The goal is to have recommendations to Governor Justice by the end of 2021 on how to streamline and better organize workforce development efforts across all state agencies. We completed what appears to have been a very successful site visit by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) to reaffirm our accreditation, led by Professor Rose Beebe and Professor Allison Sayre. I invited them along with Professor Kathy Frum, Dean of Health Sciences, to be here today to receive your recognition if they will stand.

I also invited our Director of Library Services, Stephen Hupp, who has recently published his seventh novel, *Thirteen Months*, a study of the COVID-19 pandemic, to be present to receive your recognition. Steven, please stand if you are present. Adam Stover, adjunct professor at WVUP, has been nationally recognized for his winning submission in the San Francisco International Film Festival competition, so I have invited him to be present for your recognition. Adam, please stand if you are with us. It brings great honor to WVUP for our colleagues to engage in such prolific artistic endeavors. Finally, I have invited the members of our OPEN Task Force, Opening Pathways to Equity Now, and some of their partners for equity and inclusion to be present to receive your recognition for their work in leading the President's inclusive excellence focus at WVUP. I will read the names of those actively involved in OPEN at this time, ask them to stand for recognition if present, and will apologize in advance if I have missed anyone: Dr. Steven Smith, Kenna Warren, Pamela Santer, Dr. Vijay Shah, Ameer Shah, Dr. Alicia Beeson, Nancy Harris, Kurt Klettner, Samantha Suggs, Coleen Nicholes, Jennifer Forster, Jared Smith, Senta Goudy, and Dr. Torie Jackson. I commend Dr. Smith for his strong leadership of this group, Kurt Klettner for his wise counsel, and Nancy Harris and Samantha Suggs who have recently been named Co-Chairs.

West Virginia's Chancellor, Dr. Sarah Armstrong Tucker, and members of her administrative team recently visited WVUP at my invitation, having lunch with the OPEN Task Force and meeting with members of the team leading our new partnership with Chemours and our ongoing partnership with Mr. Bee Potato Chips. They enjoyed their tour of the Mr. Bee processing plant. Dean of Workforce Development Michele Wilson and I hope to have a formal announcement of our exciting and potentially transformative new partnership with Chemours in the coming days when a few remaining details have been resolved. Veterans Advocate Darren Shearlock coordinated an excellent 9/11 commemorative program. The 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday Committee is now working with Vice President Brady Whipkey and the facilities team to get our 60<sup>th</sup> birthday commemorative fountain and water garden built before the end of the year. Dr. Torie Jackson and the Institutional Advancement team led an outdoor event as part of Marietta First Fridays to help kick off our Metallica Scholars Initiative, and Dr. Jackson reports that our Instagram traffic is up almost 500 percent and our Facebook traffic almost 1,000 percent as we publicize Metallica and many of the other ground-breaking student support programs ongoing.

Dean Senta Goudy and I have successfully incorporated the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Research and Development Corporation, with the permission and enthusiastic support of this Board, and we understand that a significant community grant is pending in the U.S. Congress, supported by both Senators Joe Manchin and Shelley Moore Capito, which will bring new resources to support the Riverhawk Farm if Congress follows through on funding the community grant requests this session. If funded, this grant will come to the R and D Corporation. Executive Vice President/COO Jackson, Vice President Whipkey, Dean Goudy, and I recently toured the Discovery World on Market Children's Museum and were delighted with the significant progress since my last tour. I serve as Vice Chair of the Board of the museum which is being funded and developed by the Ross Foundation, and we are in negotiation with the Ross Foundation for the 400+ seat theater inside the museum to become an additional extension of WVUP downtown with the university managing the theater as part of the Arts Collaborative of the MOV. Dr. Jackson is working with an external consultant to host an Early College Think Tank to be held November 8 on the Parkersburg Campus. Early College is a great source of pride for WVUP since it is core to our mission, and it is a national, state, and local community expectation that Early College will be a function of America's community colleges. While addressing opportunities to enhance our existing program, this think tank is intended to bring together all stakeholders to create a seamless path forward for a program which accounts for between one-fourth and one-third of WVUP's enrollment and accounts for as much as half of the enrollment at many community colleges nationwide. We are also about to embark on another strategic planning process with the help of an external consultant. As you might recall, we adopted a short-term plan, developed with the limitations of convening groups during COVID-19, which was approved by this Board in December 2020. With HLC reaffirmation planned for 2024, we cannot wait any longer to get a permanent plan in place, created through robust stakeholder engagement.

Speaking of HLC reaffirmation, while WVUP enjoys full and unencumbered accreditation by our primary national accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission, it is necessary to start with a minimum of two years lead time to fully prepare for the reaffirmation visit. Maintaining continuous accreditation is perhaps the single most important activity of any college or university. Later in this meeting, I will be asking this Board for a one-time transfer from reserve funds of the funding necessary to implement what I consider to be an essential investment in funding our HLC preparation. If approved, toward that end, Executive Vice President Chad Crumbaker, who serves by virtue of his position as Chief Academic Officer as our primary HLC liaison, will hire a full-time assessment coordinator to work with all stakeholders to ensure that we can articulate our desired student outcomes, assess their completion, and make data-driven programmatic decisions based on what the assessment reveals. Among other things such as fiscal integrity, this is primarily what HLC will be looking for us to demonstrate. During spring 2022 if not before, I will also identify external consultants to work separately with each of the academic divisions to help all divisional stakeholders identify best practices and needs for improvement, including an assessment of current and additional resources needed. Each of these consultants will have expertise in both the academic content of the division and in assessment. With this work completed spring

2022, we will then move during fall 2022 to integrate our findings campus-wide and begin formal preparation for the HLC's reaffirmation site visit.

Vice President Whipkey and the highly capable facilities team are doing a wonderful job refurbishing what was the Professional Advising Center space into the WVU Parkersburg Proud room. Renovations are in progress, and we will unveil this new facility soon so that it can serve as an additional meeting space for guests to campus and a collaborative work space for employees, administered by the Office of the Chief of Staff. It is going to be beautiful, and if any of the Governors would like a quick preview today, I am sure Brady will oblige.

Even during the pandemic when we cannot interact face-to-face, The National Institutes for Historically-Underserved Students remains active. Next week, we will host a virtual focus group of students and administrators from five diverse colleges nationwide, including WVUP, to offer final feedback on the toolkit of instruments we have developed for colleges and universities to assess their readiness to serve underserved students. After this feedback is incorporated into the advanced drafts, we anticipate piloting of the toolkit by these same colleges spring 2022 and, if the pandemic allows, hopefully another face-to-face Think Tank fall 2022. COVID-19 statistics are once again moving in a more encouraging direction in West Virginia and nationally, but we remain cautious and vigilant at WVUP. All of the protocols approved by this Board remain in place, plus the addition of random testing of a sample of people who are on campus face-to-face which is expected to begin later this month.

I continue to take every opportunity to serve as a proud ambassador for WVU Parkersburg, locally, statewide, and nationally, and last week I served as an invited faculty member with several other college presidents for the Future Presidents Institute of the American Association of Community Colleges in Washington, DC, during which I mentored a group of 20 aspiring college presidents from across the country, sharing with them the exciting things we have going on here at WVUP. One of the exciting things going on right now is a project of the Arts Collaborative of the MOV, a wonderful new community mural being constructed downtown, and I have invited Dean Goudy to share that project after which, Mr. Chair, my report will be completed, with respect to the Board and unless there are any questions.

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

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

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

- Executive Committee

Chairman Hardman reported that the Executive Committee met to discuss Workforce Development enrollment opportunity, enrollment, COVID-19, new projects and other business.

- Academic and Student Services Committee  
Mr. Oliverio reported VP Steven Smith provide a report to the committee on student enrollment strategies in a changing student market. Mr. Oliverio also provided an overview of written reports submitted.
- Administrative Services Committee  
Mr. Denbigh reported VP Brady Whipkey provided opportunity for the committee members to provide input for physical plant upgrades to coincide with the strategic plan. Mr. Denbigh also provided an overview of written reports submitted.

## 6. Information Items

- Fiscal Update  
VP Harris provided a detailed report on the budget summary as of month ending September 30, 2021. With review and discussion, Ms. Harris answered questions from the members.

## 7. Action Items

- Approval of Withdrawal from Reserve Funds

President Gilmer presented to the Board the resolution for approval of the withdrawal from reserve funds, for preparation of the 2024 Higher Education Learning Commission site visit.

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 transfer of up to \$250,000 from reserve funds into the college's operating budget to fund preparation for the 2024 reaffirmation site visit of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).

Mr. Oliverio seconded the motion. Motion passed.

## 8. Executive Session

Chairman Hardman requested a motion to go into Executive Session under the authority of WV Code §6-9A-4(b)(2A), to discuss confidential personnel matters.

Ms. Smith motioned to enter into Executive Session at 3:55 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Oliverio. Motioned passed.

Chairman Hardman, at 4:14 p.m. requested a motion to return to open meeting. Ms. Smith made the motion, seconded by Mr. Oliverio. Motion passed.

## 9. Board Comments/Announcement

None

**10. Next Meeting**

Next meeting will be held January 11, 2022.

**11. Adjournment**

With no further business to be discussed, Chairman Hardman, adjourned the regular meeting of the Board of Governors at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

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Steve Hardman, Chair

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JP Hushion, Secretary