

**Proposed Meeting Minutes**

***April 17, 2025***

The Western Michigan University Board of Trustees (BOT) Formal Session was called to order by Chair Shelly Edgerton at 12:09PM on *Thursday, April 17, 2025*.

The meeting was conducted in person in the Student Center Ballroom and streamed live through the BOT website. Prior marketing encouraged the public to engage and those interested in providing comment were asked to notify Board Secretary Kahler Schuemann by 5PM, *Wednesday, April 16, 2025*.

Presiding in person were Chair Shelly Edgerton, Vice Chair Alan Turfe, Trustees Kelly Burris, Lynn Chen-Zhang, Jon Hoadley, James Liggins Jr., Lisa Williams, and Kara Wood.

**A motion to accept the *April 17, 2025 BOT agenda*** was made by Vice Chair Alan Turfe with a second by Trustee Kara Wood. The motion passed unanimously.

**A motion to accept the minutes as exhibited from the *February 6, 2025 BOT Meeting*** was made by Trustee Jon Hoadley, and with a second Trustee Kara Wood and passed with full support of the voting members.

Chair Shelly Edgerton led recognition of President Ed Montgomery with commentary following by Trustee Emeritus Bill Johnston, Faculty Senate President Amy Naugle, Western Student Association Outgoing President Alex Kasprzk, and Graduate Student Association Outgoing President Jocelyn Medina.

Remarks were provided by Chair Shelly Edgerton – *Attachment A*, followed by remarks from President Edward Montgomery – *Attachment B*.

Faculty Senate President Amy Naugle, Western Student Association Outgoing President Alex Kasprzk, and Graduate Student Association Outgoing President Jocelyn Medina provided comments regarding their respective areas and outlined ongoing activities and initiatives relating to shared governance, promoting student involvement, and academic enrichment.

President Edward Montgomery introduced Dr. Robert Berkhofer, and Samantha Schultz, who presented *International Congress on Medieval Studies and Experiential Learning*.

There was no indicated public interest in providing commentary regarding any Action Items.

As Action Items, VP for Student Services Diane Anderson recommended action to Name the New Valley Residence Hall “Golden Oaks” at “The Valleys”. **A motion to support Naming the New Valley Residence Hall “Golden Oaks” at “The Valleys”** was made by Trustee Kara Wood, with a second by Trustee Jon Hoadley and passed unanimously.

**A motion to approve the Consent Items** was made by Trustee Kelly Burris, with a second from Trustee Lynn Chen-Zhang. The BOT unanimously approved the following Consent Items as exhibited: Personnel Report; Curriculum Proposals; Sale of BTR Parcel (Unit 30); Liquor Licenses – Multiple Events (July 10, 2025, August 7, 2025, November 7, 2025); Annuity and Life Income Funds Performance Report; and Operating Cash Investment Performance Report.

The following individuals addressed the Board in **General Public Comments**: Pam Wadsworth, Olivia Gries, Susan Freeman, Don Cooney, William Santiago-Valles, Jessyca Olvera, Jacinda Swanson, Daniel Smith, Avery Kuiper, Said Abubakr, Roland Bissonnette, Marissa Wagner, and Michelle Ringle.

The BOT meeting ended at 2:10PM following **a motion to adjourn** made by Trustee James Liggins Jr. with a second by Trustee Kara Wood, and unanimous approval.

Respectfully submitted,



Kahler B. Schuermann, Ph.D.  
Chief of Staff and Secretary to the Board of Trustees  
Western Michigan University

## Proposed Meeting Minutes

***April 23, 2025***

The Western Michigan University Board of Trustees (BOT) Formal Session SPECIAL BOARD MEETING was called to order by Chair Shelly Edgerton at 2:06PM on *Thursday, April 23, 2025*.

The meeting was conducted in person in the Student Center Ballroom and streamed live through the BOT website.

Presiding in person were Chair Shelly Edgerton, Vice Chair Alan Turfe, Trustees Kelly Burris, Lynn Chen-Zhang, Jon Hoadley, James Liggins Jr., and Kara Wood. Trustees Lisa Williams and Kara Wood engaged virtually.

**A motion to accept the April 23, 2025 SPECIAL MEETING BOT agenda** was made by Trustee James Liggins Jr. with a second by Trustee Kelly Burris. The motion passed unanimously.

Remarks were provided by Chair Shelly Edgerton – *Attachment C*, followed by remarks from President Edward Montgomery – *Attachment D*.

Each trustee next provided individual commentary regarding their perspective on the presidential search process and the responsibility before them, electing the tenth president of WMU.

For the SPECIAL BOARD MEETING Action Item, Trustee James Liggins Jr. recommended Russell A. Kavalhuna for Appointment as Western Michigan University's Tenth President. **A motion to support Appointing Russell A. Kavalhuna as Western Michigan University's Tenth President** was made by Trustee James Liggins Jr., with a second by Trustee Jon Hoadley and passed unanimously.

Congratulatory remarks were offered by Faculty Senate President Amy Naugle, Western Student Association Outgoing President Alex Kasprzk, and Graduate Student Association Outgoing President Jocelyn Medina.

President Elect Kavalhuna provided remarks highlighting appreciation and excitement surrounding the leadership appointment.

The BOT meeting ended at 3:02PM following **a motion to adjourn** made by James Liggins Jr. with a second by Trustee Kelly Burris, and unanimous approval.

Respectfully submitted,



Kahler B. Schuermann, Ph.D.

Chief of Staff and Secretary to the Board of Trustees  
Western Michigan University

## **ATTACHMENT A**

### **WMU Board of Trustees Chair Edgerton's Remarks April 17, 2025**

Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you for joining us for the WMU Board of Trustees meeting in-person and virtually. It is my pleasure to be here with you today. As we gather to discuss important matters and make decisions that are shaping our University, I want to acknowledge the dedication of board members. Thank you for your support and for being champions of Western Michigan University!

In this final month of the academic year, today offers an opportunity for us to reflect on and honor the remarkable leadership of Dr. Edward Montgomery, the ninth president of Western Michigan University. As he prepares to close this chapter of his career and step into the next, we'd like to pause to acknowledge the depth and impact of his presidency since his tenure began on August 1, 2017.

My appointment to this board came in 2018, allowing me the pleasure of serving during nearly all of President Montgomery's tenure. His leadership has shaped this campus in truly remarkable ways, both in its physical environment and in advancing its core mission. He has aligned University priorities with the board's fiduciary responsibilities.

His impact will be remembered for advancing academic excellence and student support resources, including through the nationally historic Empowering Futures Gift, championing external research efforts and creative scholarship, and advancing the critical work of student belonging and well-being, including by signing the Okanagan Charter.

All these developments center on student success. It is therefore deeply appropriate that the student essential needs program now bears his name and will forever be known as the Montgomery Essential Needs program. This is a fitting recognition of Dr. Montgomery's unrelenting focus on student success throughout his presidency.

President Montgomery, thank you for always keeping students at the center of your decisions. Your leadership has elevated Western Michigan University educational excellence, defined by our exceptional Experience-Driven Learning and student success initiatives.

You will be deeply missed, and we wish you all the best as you and Kari begin the next chapter. Would you please join me in a round of applause for our 9th President, Dr. Edward Montgomery?

I mentioned the Montgomery Essential Needs program and Giving Day earlier, but I want to highlight the Bronco spirit on full display yesterday during Giving Day—thank you to all our alumni, students, faculty, staff and friends for showing up and giving back.

Now, I'd like to turn our attention to today's agenda. We'll hear remarks from President Montgomery, as well as our shared governance partners from the Faculty Senate, Western Student Association and the Graduate Student Association.

In a special presentation, WMU's Medieval Institute is here today to update us on the institute and the 60th International Congress on Medieval Studies, an incredible campus event bringing together thousands of medieval scholars in-person and virtually from across the country. Dr. Montgomery will introduce our speakers later in the meeting.

We have a pair of action items to consider today, including the naming of the new Valley 3 Residence Hall. Dr. Diane Anderson, vice president of student affairs, will share the exciting recommendation on the new name for the residence hall—opening to first-year students in fall 2026—and the connection it represents in the Valleys.

We'll consider several consent items on the agenda, including those related to curriculum, personnel and several fund performance reports. Additionally, we will consider the sale of BTR parcel unit 30 and approval of three liquor licenses to be used later this year.

Presidential search update: At this time, I'd like to give a brief update on the search for WMU's next leader. We are in the final stages of our presidential search. Within the last several weeks, we had four candidates on campus for confidential meetings with individuals from among our faculty, staff and students as well as deans, the President's Cabinet, representatives from collective bargaining groups and individuals from the greater community.

In coming days, this Board will hold at a special meeting at which time we will conduct a historic vote to appoint our 10th president. I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to members of the Presidential Search Advisory Committee, my fellow board members and all those who supported this process. Thank you very much for your engagement. We'll have more to share in the near future.



## **ATTACHMENT B**

### **WMU Board of Trustees President Montgomery's Remarks April 17, 2025**

Thank you all for the kind words. Western will always hold a special place in our hearts.

And we're thrilled to hear that so many Giving Day donors share our appreciation for the Essential Needs program and its vital work addressing students' basic needs. For some students, these resources make a life-changing difference along their path to a degree.

Thank you to all who were moved to support this important program—and many other funds—on Giving Day. While the funds may vary, they all serve a common purpose: advancing student success. Western's North Star is holistic, Experience-Driven Learning, and generous contributions are part of helping make such transformative experiences possible by creating opportunity for current and future Broncos.

I also want to recognize the tremendous efforts of the team that organized Giving Day. Financial contributions that come from across the state, country and world happen over just one day, but the behind-the-scenes work spans weeks of planning, coordination and creativity. We're grateful for their leadership in bringing the Bronco community together in support of our students.

In addition to the generosity of the Bronco community, there's more to be proud of. As we approach the end of the academic year, I'd like to take a moment to highlight some of the other ways faculty, staff and students across campus have demonstrated excellence.

Look no further than our national champs! The tremendous student-athletes of our men's ice hockey team, led by Head Coach Pat Ferschweiler and his staff, showed us what Bronco excellence looks like, culminating in a history-making season filled with firsts.

Discipline, teamwork and competing at the highest level led them to bring home Western's first NCAA national championship since 1965. The atmosphere in the arena in St. Louis—and in the hockey team's homecoming rallies for that matter—was electric. Well done! You all made the Bronco Nation proud.

And while we're talking about athletic prowess and championships, I'd like to congratulate the WMU Dance Team, who brought home the 2025 national championship title in Division I Jazz Team Performance. Also, kudos to the Bronco Skating Team, who performed at their national competition last weekend and Abby Mumby received two gold medals. Way to go!

Our Broncos are also at the top of their game in broadcasting. Congratulations to 89.1 WIDR-FM, our student-run radio station, for earning the Abraham & Borst Award for Best Overall Station at the 85th annual IBS International Media Conference. In total, WIDR was a finalist for 13 awards—13!—taking top honors in categories such as Best Logo, Best College Station for more than 10,000 students, and Best Celebrity or Artist Interview. Great job!

Looking ahead, there's another big day of celebration on the horizon—the biggest for an institution of higher learning. We're excited for commencement on Saturday, April 26. And this spring graduation, we will proudly confer more than 2,100 degrees to students representing 50 countries. This milestone speaks volumes about the dedication of our faculty and staff, who work tirelessly to deliver a transformational learning environment so that each of our Broncos can pursue meaningful careers and a life well lived. We hope to see you there.

Our faculty and staff continue to inspire with their achievements. Please join me in congratulating Dr. Angela Perez-Villa, assistant professor of history, for receiving the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education's 2025 Early Career Award. This prestigious recognition highlights Dr. Perez-Villa's impactful scholarship and her commitment to advancing knowledge. We are proud to celebrate this achievement with her.

Western's commitment to excellence is also reflected in the outstanding service of our staff. Each semester, the Make a Difference Awards recognize employees who go above and beyond. Please join me in celebrating the Spring 2025 Semiannual Make a Difference Award recipients:

- Adriana Cardoso Reyes, associate director of institutional accreditation and planning
- WMU Public Safety Officer Michael Lininger and K9 Officer Brax
- Ann Matz, business manager associate for WMUK Radio
- DebbieLynn Mayo, student success navigator in Merze Tate College
- Cristine Thomas, program manager in the Department of Geological and Env. Sciences

We thank them for their extraordinary contributions. They embody our mission: “So that all may learn.”

We also celebrate the recipients of WMU’s Academic Advising Awards and for being champions for student success. Advisors play a pivotal role in the academic journeys of our students. Congratulations to:

- Derek Andree, CEHD—Student’s Choice Award
- Angelina Corbitt, College of Arts and Sciences—New Advisor Award
- Sharon Van Dyken, College of Aviation—Excellence in Academic Advising Award
- Diana Blouin, College of Arts and Sciences—Service in Academic Advising Award

And speaking of Bronco success, our recent Broncos@Work visit with alumni at Mann+Hummel was a wonderful reminder of the strength and reach of our alumni network. We couldn’t be more proud to have Broncos helping to lead Mann+Hummel’s endeavor that ensures a cleaner and brighter planet for all through filtration.

We recently spent the day in Lansing showcasing Western Michigan University at the WMU Advocacy Day at the state capitol. A delegation of students, staff and faculty spent an energizing day in Lansing, and we’re grateful to the state leaders who engaged with us.

It’s always rewarding to demonstrate how Western strengthens Michigan—through the meaningful careers our graduates build in communities across the state and the many ways our faculty and staff apply their knowledge and expertise to advance the public good. Special thanks to the Office of Government Relations for organizing this event.

Finally, I’d like to conclude my remarks by recognizing the graduates of WMU’s 2024–25 Academic Leadership Academy. Led by the WMUx Office of Faculty Development, this program prepares emerging leaders to navigate the complexities of higher education through deep engagement with leadership theory, governance, budgeting, intercultural conflict, and change management. Congratulations to the ALA graduates.



## **ATTACHMENT C**

### **WMU Board of Trustees Chair Edgerton's Remarks April 23, 2025**

Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you for joining us in-person or virtually for this special meeting of the WMU Board of Trustees.

It is my great honor to begin this meeting. Our sole action item today is the vote to appoint the 10th president of Western Michigan University. This moment reflects not only the importance of this institution but also the deep responsibility this board carries as stewards of its leadership.

Selecting a president is among the most consequential decisions our board makes. We take that responsibility seriously. And we approached this process with the full weight it deserves—with care, intention and commitment to our mission.

I need to now recognize the important role our Presidential Search Advisory Committee played in this process. We selected 25 representatives who gave time, effort and important perspective to the credibility of this search. They were led by our Board co chairs, Trustee James Liggins and Trustee Kara Wood. Can I please ask all those in attendance who served on this distinguished committee to please rise and be recognized.

Thank you! We launched an expansive and highly competitive national search that attracted a strong and diverse pool of leaders with vision, experience and passion for higher education. But from that remarkable group, one candidate rose as the best match for this moment in our Western's history.

We are at a pivotal time of strength — a position earned through years of hard work, dedication and focus from this community. Yet we are also operating in a time when higher education is facing the greatest disruption in a generation. Disruption, though, can mean opportunity.

And we need a leader for such a time as this.

## **ATTACHMENT D**

### **WMU Board of Trustees President Montgomery's Remarks April 23, 2025**

Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for being here. I echo Chair Edgerton's sentiments, extending gratitude to the Board of Trustees and the Presidential Search Advisory Committee for leading an extensive search for Western Michigan University's 10th president. Their dedication to the future of this great institution is appreciated—because of their work, Western is well-positioned for continued success.

Today is significant in Bronco history—and it's one we've approached with confidence, excitement and optimism. As we celebrate this transition, it's worth taking a moment to recognize the progress made in recent years.

Few achievements speak more to our mission than the progress we've made in advancing student success. That progress is matched by the strength of our research efforts and a deepened commitment to access and continued educational excellence “so that all may learn.” Our impact, however, extends far beyond the classroom.

We've also strengthened community ties in Kalamazoo and across the state by building partnerships with businesses, nonprofits, minority-owned and startup companies, expanding Experience-Driven Education for students.

We've led the way in sustainability, embedding innovative environmental practices into our operations, academic programming and student life.

WMU has prioritized well-being on campus—in fact, we've become champions for developing a healthy, inclusive environment.

This progress was made possible by a shared commitment to the vision from faculty, staff, students, trustees, alumni and partners gathered here and across the University and greater community.

Serving as president for the past eight years has been an incredible honor. Over these years, I've had the opportunity to witness and be a part of an extraordinary journey I just unpacked—I'll add that we recently clinched national championships thanks to the skill and talents of our incredible student-athletes.

I feel immense pride in what we've built—our achievements have laid a strong foundation. And now, the time has come to pass the torch to a leader of exceptional ability.

Russ Kavalhuna brings a distinguished career in public service and higher education, along with a long personal connection to our campus. His success across three different sectors demonstrates that he can navigate and champion our cause across a broad array of stakeholders.

I first had the honor of meeting Russ in 2017, during my early days at WMU. At the time, he was serving as executive director of flight operations in the College of Aviation, playing a key role on the team of staff advancing Western's rising aviation reputation and enrollment trend.

In 2018, I proudly attended his inauguration as the new President of Henry Ford College, underscoring his clear vision for higher education. Most recently, in 2023, we had the opportunity to collaborate on Gov. Whitmer's Growing Michigan Together Council, where we worked to develop solutions that strengthen Michigan's workforce, fuel economic growth and expand opportunity for all Michiganders to ascend to higher heights.

At his core, he is a tireless champion for higher education and understands it's one of the keys to improving the economic climate in Michigan and critical to the social mobility of its residents—and it's clear that he's earned the respect of leaders throughout the state.

He's devoted to Western, hard-working, understands our mission deeply, cares deeply about the students, faculty and staff and is committed to building an inclusive environment here at Western.

I'm confident the future of our institution is in the capable hands of a leader who will advocate far and wide for our worth and the remarkable experience-driven education we provide. As author John O'Donohue said, "May leadership be for you a true adventure of growth and success."

I am fully committed to a smooth and effective transition so that Western can enter its next chapter with purpose and momentum. The transition will be as collaborative and strong as the work that lies ahead.

In fact, we've already connected to discuss the transition and are aligned in our vision—we're looking forward to watching our Broncos soar into the future.

It has been my privilege to serve, and I look to Western's future with deep gratitude and immense optimism.

Thank you.