

**Proposed Meeting Minutes**

***October 30, 2025***

The Western Michigan University Board of Trustees (BOT) Formal Session was called to order by Chair Shelly Edgerton at 12:12PM on *Thursday, October 30, 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, October 29, 2025*.

Presiding in person were Chair Shelly Edgerton, Vice Chair Alan Turfe, Trustees Lynn Chen-Zhang, Jon Hoadley, James Liggins Jr, and Kara Wood. Trustee Lisa Williams participated virtually. Trustee Kelly Burris made prior arrangement to be absent.

**A motion to accept the *October 30, 2025 BOT agenda*** was made by Trustee James Liggins Jr, with a second by Trustee Kara Wood. The motion passed unanimously.

**A motion to accept the minutes as exhibited from the *September 11, 2025 BOT Meeting*** was made by Trustee Kara Wood with a second by Trustee Jon Hoadley, and passed with full support of the voting members.

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

Faculty Senate President Amy Naugle, Western Student Association President Luke Kritzman, and Graduate Student Association President Claire Binford provided comments regarding their respective areas and outlined ongoing activities and initiatives relating to shared governance, promoting student involvement, and academic enrichment.

Next, President Russ Kavalhuna introduced Director of Sustainability, Jeff Spoelstra, and Recruitment and Outreach Specialist, Maddie Christians, who presented: *Broncos for Sustainability Across WMU*.

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

As Action Items, Vice President for Business and Finance Jan Van Der Kley recommended the WMU Police Officer's Association (POA) Wage Agreement. **A motion to support the WMU Police Officer's Association (POA) Wage Agreement** was made by Trustee Kara Wood, with a second by Trustee James Liggins Jr and passed unanimously.

Vice President for Business and Finance Jan Van Der Kley next proposed the Five Year Capital Outlay Master Plan and Capital Project Request. **A motion to support the Five Year Capital Outlay Master Plan and Capital Project Request** was made by Trustee Jon Hoadley, with a second by Trustee Lynn Chen-Zhang, and passed unanimously.

Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Chris Cheatham next sought approval for Prior Learning Assessment Fee. **A motion to support Prior Learning Assessment Fee** was made by Trustee Kara Wood, with a second by Trustee James Liggins Jr and passed unanimously.

Next, Trustee Jon Hoadley highlighted the findings and advocated acceptance of the Western Michigan University External Audit, 2025. **A motion to accept the Western Michigan University External Audit, 2025** was made by Trustee Kara Wood with a second by Trustee Lynn Chen-Zhang. The motion passed unanimously.

**A motion to approve the Consent Items** was made by Trustee Kara Wood, with a second from Trustee Jon Hoadley. The BOT unanimously approved the following Consent Items as exhibited: Curriculum Proposals; Personnel Report; Utility Easement Request from the City of Kalamazoo; and Liquor License – College of Aviation, November 14, 2025.

Donielle Easlick addressed the Board in **General Public Comments**.

The BOT meeting ended at 1:28PM following **a motion to adjourn** made by Trustee Jon Hoadley with a second by Trustee Kara Wood, and unanimous approval.

Respectfully submitted,



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

## **ATTACHMENT A**

### **WMU Board of Trustees Chair Edgerton's Remarks October 30, 2025**

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

I am delighted to be with you today as we come together to consider important matters that help guide the University. I want to take a moment to thank each trustee for their leadership and dedication to Western. It's an honor to help steer this ship as we carry out board responsibilities to support the University's mission, "So that all may learn."

We have incredible momentum and so much to be excited about at Western right now, as you will hear in the speaker's remarks today.

I want to recognize a few individuals as we begin our meeting. First, congratulations to Trustee Lynn Chen-Zhang and Charles Zhang, who recently received the prestigious Blue Cloud Award, given annually by the China Institute of America to visionary leaders whose achievements advance understanding between the United States and China in the fields of art, business and philanthropy.

Trustee Chen-Zhang is a trusted and beloved member and former chair of the board of trustees, a WMU Foundation board member, and she's a valued member of the Western community. We congratulate you and Charles on receiving this distinguished award. Would you join me in congratulating these two special alumni for this high and well-deserved honor?

I also want to congratulate Trustee Kara Wood and President Kavalhuna on being recognized among the 200 Most Influential Leaders in West Michigan by Crain's Grand Rapids Business. What an honor to be acknowledged, and what a pleasure it is to have both of you in leadership here at Western. Please join me in giving them a round of applause.

I'm sure President Kavalhuna will share a highlight reel of recent Western events in a few moments, but I wanted to take a minute to spotlight one in particular.

If you saw the news coverage of the Western men's ice hockey team receiving their championship rings during a ceremony in Heritage Hall, you may have seen a few board members in attendance for that special moment. Thank you to Trustees Chen-Zhang,

Liggins and Williams for attending the hockey team's ring ceremony—always a memorable time celebrating our championship team.

And the team is off to a solid start this season, most recently beating U of M on Friday night in a dominating 5-2 win. In addition to overseeing and governing WMU, the trustees take great pride in being part of the University community by showing up to celebrate students, faculty and staff whenever possible.

Before we move on to today's action items, I want to comment briefly on the state budgeting process. The fiscal year 2026 budget was signed into law Oct. 7, and I want to thank the bipartisan group of legislators who worked with their colleagues in both the House and Senate to ensure its passage.

At WMU, we will continue providing world-class teaching and contributing to the state's economy. We extend gratitude to our legislative partners for recognizing the important role higher education plays in moving Michigan forward.

Now, let's turn our attention to today's agenda.

This afternoon, we will hear from Jan Van Der Kley, vice president for business and finance, on the WMU Police Officers Association wage agreement. VP Van Der Kley will also share the five-year capital outlay plan and a capital project request for our consideration.

Additionally, we will hear from Interim Provost Chris Cheatham, who will introduce the prior learning assessment fee agenda item.

As part of the Board of Trustees' fiduciary responsibility to ensure the University's sound financial oversight and accountability, Trustee Hoadley will share findings from the 2025 WMU external audit.

And lastly, on the consent agenda, the board will consider several curriculum proposals, the personnel report, a utility easement request from the city of Kalamazoo and a liquor license request from the College of Aviation.

## ATTACHMENT B

### WMU Board of Trustees President Kavalhuna's Remarks October 30, 2025

Thank you, Madam Chair. Good to see you, Broncos. I'm excited about this being my second meeting in this room. The last time I was in this room with you trustees, it was a life-changing moment for me and I'm excited to be back with you.

We are about halfway through the fall term and I'm feeling excited and energized to be with you all today. I want to brag about some of the folks up here as well. The Chair and I have to divvy up how much we can brag about each of you, but I got my fair share because she got to talk about Trustee Chen-Zhang and her husband and the Blue Cloud Award, but I want to brag to her about something that just got announced this morning, which was that the Chen-Zhangs— I think they should just give them a cape— were honored with the 2025 Business Community Arts Award by the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo.

This is in recognition of what I know many of you already know, but I'm just starting to learn about, is that the Chen-Zhangs are big supporters of both WMU and the arts community and it was our own Miller Auditorium folks who nominated you for this award. I don't know if you knew that, Trustee Chen-Zhang, but Tracey Lawie and Emily Duguay nominated you and I'm excited that you were awarded for that. Congratulations.

Thank you for your support in the community from arts and education to animal welfare, Trustee Chen-Zhang.

For those of you that did not see yesterday, we had an exciting announcement— the College of Business, in partnership with the Leadership and Business Strategy Program and their Director, Dr. Doug Lepisto, put together an operation where students will have a free opportunity to ride from campus to downtown on an interestingly marked bus that says, "Bring the Juice." If you haven't seen that bus, go ahead and just Google Kalamazoo *Bring the Juice* bus and you'll see a lot of great press we got yesterday.

You know we trustees have not always been as good as we want to, in connecting the campus with downtown and the downtown to the campus and this transportation is something that I don't know we've ever had. It's exciting and I encourage you to encourage students to take advantage of that. It'll help downtown because our students go down there, they get engaged with employers, they spend money.



It'll help downtown because those students wouldn't simply be there if it weren't for the university. So, we're excited about that and I would be remiss, if I didn't thank the Monroe Brown Foundation and the Hall Foundation Downtown Initiative Fund, Sleeping Giant Capital, and United Way of South Central Michigan for being donors and supporters of that.

I'm also excited because Western was awarded nearly \$14 million in a federal grant to support college readiness. Now, I know each of you know that it's been an interesting six months, well, 10 months on the federal grant front, but this one is new and it's for Western and it's for helping thousands of middle schoolers in our region to find their way to college in general, but certainly Western, we hope, with skills and confidence that implements recognized ways to increase college-going culture. I just know this wouldn't have happened without my teammate, Dr. Erika Carr being the one that put that program forward. \$14 million is certainly something that will help not only the university, but our community.

I also want to recognize the Office of Research and Innovation, headed up by Dr. Remzi Seker, who's right here in the front. Again, you know we've been riding uphill, so to speak, in the last 10 months on the front of grants and research dollars, but despite that, we're proud to note that his team has secured \$60 million in external grants for the fiscal year of 24 to 25 and recorded over \$51 million in externally funded research expenditures, now that was with \$127 million of submitted proposals.

So almost half of the proposals were granted. That's led to not just money for the university and our region, but for some pretty interesting unique facts about Western, which is that 26 patents were filed from within our institution and 13 have made it to the second stage application. That's the highest in our university's history. And again, please join me in thanking Dr. Seker for his effort on that.

For those of you that know Brittani Jackson, Assistant Professor of Accountancy, you would not be surprised that she has been named the *2025 Woman to Watch- Emerging Leader*, by the Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants. She is awarded this because she's building a pipeline for our students through experience-driven learning to get connected directly with accounting career professionals, giving these young folks an opportunity to see what it's like to be a public accounting professional. This is also on behalf of the WMU Chapter of National Association of Black Accountants Incorporated, that has received the Future of Accounting Award from that professional organization. So, please give it up for Dr. Brittani Jackson.

Madam Chair, you mentioned that the College of Aviation was seeking a liquor license— This has nothing to do with what the Sky Broncos Precision Flight Team has done, maybe if they win and they have a celebration a long way away from airplanes, but the Sky Broncos, as you may or may not know, is a competition group that you have to try out for and spend a lot of time practicing for, with several events, kind of like an Olympics with airplanes and aviation knowledge.

Over the last 13 years, our Sky Broncos have won the regional competition 12 times. And again, they won it just this last year. They were in Ken State and they just consistently win the regionals and go on to the nationals. They did that just recently and they'll be on their way to the national championship in the spring. Congratulations to the Sky Broncos.

You mentioned athletics, Madam Chair. We have been competing and winning a lot which is great. One of the things that you didn't mention was that our women's soccer team has now won the MAC championship for the third consecutive year. It was fitting that I was at the game with Vice President Bartholomae watching the women take on this school from Mount Pleasant that if we won, we would clinch the MAC championship. It was a really great game. It was just the right opponent to have when we needed a win to clinch the MAC championship.

And you know, I think we can keep that ball rolling. If you haven't heard, there is a football game in Kalamazoo on Saturday at 4 p.m. It's against that same team from Mount Pleasant and we're both tied for number two in the league. We're really excited about this for a couple reasons. Number one, this is an opportunity for us to be on the national stage— ESPN will be carrying the game and weather looks like it's going to be really nice. What we really need from everyone in the community, is to show up and show out for Bronco Nation, by selling out Waldo.

So we're putting in a lot of effort around downtown. I was in the Radisson just last night and I saw a sandwich board that said sellout central and I've got a button on my lapel here that I'm happy to share with anyone who wants to repeat its mantra which says "beat..." and then it's the name of that school— my daughter's reading Harry Potter and so that that's the name that will not be mentioned. I hope to see you all and hopefully relish in a victory there.

Before we do that, I just want to congratulate the women's soccer team on winning the MAC for the third year in a row. Join me in congratulating them. I'm almost done, Madam Chair. I promise.

Homecoming also happened between the last time we met and today.

I want to thank so many folks who put in a lot of effort to make that a successful weekend. It was another time for great weather, great football, great events, and a victory. Thereafter we had CommUniverCity where over 30,300 partners came and celebrated what we are to the community, which is as I say, the center of gravity for ideas and economic growth and human prosperity.

You mentioned Capitol Day, which was a really great effort from both Academic Affairs and Government Relations. I was really excited because the hockey team was able to sit in the speaker's office and give the speaker a chance to hold the national championship trophy. And he shared that out on social media, because he's a Bronco. We also were really excited that the arena that we're going to be hosting all of our basketball games, men and women, and hockey games, broke ground. That was an exciting event that I'm sure you saw a lot of.

Madam Chair, I do need to say thank you, to you. You and President Naugle of the Faculty Senate have been diligently going through 10 listening tour sessions for the presidential transition team where we've learned about what our community believes that this institution has as strengths and weaknesses, and we're getting ready to report out our learnings on that.

I know President Naugle will be making comments, but I just want both of you to know as a new president, this has been a really successful opportunity for me to learn and listen, but it just simply would not have happened without the draw that you and President Naugle have brought. And we've met faculty and staff and students and community members and alumni. It just is a really exciting time to be a Bronco. And it's even more exciting having heard the excitement that exists in those, presidential listening sessions.

Another that I'm proud to share is that WMU was, once again recognized as a Gold Level Veteran Friendly School this year by the Michigan Veterans Association. That's an achievement possible by WMU's Office of Military and Veterans Affairs. So, thank you for that. And, Madam Chair, I just want to say, we continue as a cabinet to look at the future of Western Michigan University. We've got some really great strengths and that is the pride that you've seen and heard of all Broncos in our university.

I reported out that one of the major things we're going to be looking at is enrollment because that is one of the ways that we make sure we pay the bills. And we have budgeted to be down by about 1.7% in enrollment.



We came in a little better than that, but we hope to turn that completely around. We came in at down 1.6%. So, what you and I and the board has been focusing on, and I say this from our community, is we're going to make it an entire university wide focus that enrollment will be a major focus for certainly this board. My hope is for the cabinet and the institution and we're optimistic with some enrollment goals that we'll be publishing later this year. So, Madam Chair, I'll take any questions from the board, but I'm excited to be here and I look forward to Saturday where we will have a sunny football day and a win.