

Proposed Meeting Minutes

December 4, 2025

The Western Michigan University Board of Trustees (BOT) Formal Session was called to order by Chair Shelly Edgerton at 12:00PM on *Thursday, December 4, 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, December 3, 2025*.

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

A motion to accept the *December 4, 2025 BOT agenda* was made by Trustee Jon Hoadley, with a second by Trustee Lynn Chen-Zhang. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion to accept the minutes as exhibited from the *October 30, 2025 BOT Meeting* was made by Trustee James Liggins Jr with a second by Trustee Kara Wood, 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 WMU's Director of the School of Theatre and Dance, Dr. Joan Herrington, and student Jack Austin who presented: *The Voice of Bronco Success*.

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

As Action Items, Vice President for Student Affairs Diane Anderson recommended the Student Housing and Meal Rates 2026/27. **A motion to support the Student Housing and Meal Rates 2026/27** was made by Trustee James Liggins Jr with a second by Trustee Kara Wood, and passed unanimously.

A motion to approve the Consent Items was made by Trustee Jon Hoadley, with a second by Trustee Lynn Chen-Zhang. The BOT unanimously approved the following Consent Items as exhibited: Curriculum Proposals; and Personnel Report.

The BOT meeting ended at 1:33PM following **a motion to adjourn** made by Trustee Kara Wood with a second by Trustee Lynn Chen-Zhang, 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 December 4, 2025

Good afternoon. It's wonderful to gather for the Dec. 4 meeting of the WMU Board of Trustees. Thank you, trustees, for being here. And thank you to our audience and those watching via livestream for being here also.

What a semester it's been for the University! While I am sure President Kavalhuna will share a University-wide highlight reel shortly, I have to say I am ecstatic about and impressed with the exciting wins and performances on the field and on the court this fall. Several of the trustees and I can personally attest to the incredible energy and spirit at Western's athletic events. Bronco pride has been on full display. And we have even more to look forward to—more on that in just a moment.

We are also quickly approaching one of the most important days in a Bronco's time at Western: commencement. On Saturday, Dec. 13, we will confer more than 1,100 degrees during the 345th commencement ceremonies at Miller Auditorium.

Commencement is an extremely meaningful experience for our graduates, representing the culmination of the grit and determination they poured into their studies over multiple years. And for their families and supporters and the rest of the WMU community, it's a joyous time to celebrate our graduates' successes as we acknowledge them with the excitement and pride that come with the commencement ceremony.

Please join us if you are able. This year is particularly special as it marks our 10th president's first commencement—as president of WMU, that is! He walked the stage as a graduate many years ago. We look forward to having President Kavalhuna join in the ceremonies and confer the degrees on our graduates.

And in addition to cheering on our soon-to-be graduates, we are also rooting for another group of talented students: our Bronco footballers, who will be taking over Ford Field this Saturday at noon in the MAC Championship. Let's bring home the title!

As we move through the final agenda of the semester, I want to extend sincere appreciation to my fellow board colleagues. It is both a significant responsibility and a great honor to help advance this University and provide strong fiduciary leadership. I have the utmost respect for each of you and value the thoughtfulness, skill and care you bring to the role of trustee.

I also want to extend thanks to our shared governance partners, who join us at each meeting. Faculty Senate President **Dr. Amy Naugle**, Graduate Student Association President **Claire Binford** and Western Student Association President **Luke Kritzman**, we appreciate you for keeping us informed through your updates, and we look forward to continued engagement and partnership in the future. Thank you for your valuable contributions to WMU.

Now, for today's agenda.

We will hear from the shared governance partners I just mentioned in a few moments. Later, President Kavalhuna will introduce a Bronco faculty and student duo—Joan Herrington, director of the School of Theatre and Dance, and Jack Austin, a highly successful music theatre performance student—who will share a presentation you don't want to miss: "The Voice of Bronco Success."

As we look forward to the opening of our new residence hall, Golden Oaks, in fall 2026, we are excited about offering students a modern, innovative space designed to support their success and give them a place to connect and belong.

With that in mind, in action items today, we will consider student housing and meal rates for the 2026-27 academic year.

Under the consent agenda action item, we will consider curriculum proposals and a personnel report.

ATTACHMENT B

WMU Board of Trustees President Kavalhuna's Remarks December 4, 2025

Thank you, Madam Chair. Good afternoon, trustees. Welcome back to the greatest university on the planet. Friends and colleagues, happy holidays to you all, I hope you had a safe and wonderful Thanksgiving.

I have a couple of housekeeping matters—fun housekeeping matters. I didn't tell her I was going to do this, but in a moment, I'd like to ask her to stand. I want to introduce the Interim Vice President of DEI, who has been gracious to work with me while filling a very important leadership role. She's not only in a leadership role in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion but also sits at the cabinet table with me and the cabinet. In the few short meetings that she's been a part of, she has been a wonderful addition with knowledge and vigor and actually a little bit of humor sometimes too, which is in short supply. If you hadn't had a chance to see what I had to say publicly about Dr. Danyelle Gregory, please do check your email colleagues, because we rarely have an opportunity to have someone who is a graduate of Western Michigan University, is from Southwest Michigan, cares deeply about the work that she intends to lead, and then also has a really great intense vigor for wanting to do the work.

When I first met her and asked her to consider this role, she told me she didn't want to be a placeholder. She said that if she were going to do this work, she wanted to keep it moving forward and have the authority to speak as a leader at the cabinet table. That's when I knew she was the right person for the job.

Trustees, I invite you to introduce yourselves to our Interim Vice President after the meeting. Colleagues from the community, please do the same. Dr. Gregory, would you please stand? I am proud to introduce our Interim Vice President of DEI, Dr. Danyelle Gregory.

The second housekeeping item is the fun one. I want to thank my fellow presidents, President Binford and President Kritzman. As you may recall, they were going to pie me. The Graduate Student Association organized a food drive, and if they collected 10,000 items, the president would get pied. We sat right down on the stairs and got pied. Luke, you took it about five times. Claire and I took something close to that. If you need photographic evidence, we have it, though it's not the portrait I want on the website. They even had gowns for us, and President Kritzman wore goggles. Shared governance is alive and well at Western Michigan University.

Along those lines, we're excited about the upcoming commencement, as the Chair mentioned. For those of you who have attended commencement before, I've asked Dr. Scheumann and his team to consider a few changes to the run of show. I'll simply say: come and see how we've changed commencement. My goal is to bring in more voices and more excitement, and I'll be sharing the stage with at least one important person.

We are also excited to confer 802 bachelor's degrees, 280 master's degrees, 19 doctoral degrees, and one specialty degree. All degrees are important, but I want to highlight the doctoral degrees. Dr. Remzi Seker has been pushing hard to move Western Michigan University toward R1 status, and one of the key metrics is the number of doctoral degrees conferred. Nineteen is a healthy number, and I want to thank everyone involved—especially the students earning those degrees. I don't see Dr. Fuller here, but she is one of my teammates who will be earning her doctorate, and I want to recognize her. Dr. Seker, thank you for helping move this work forward.

I also want to highlight the College of Education and Human Development under Dean Dinehart. They received a \$1.2 million grant to fund the SHINE project, an interdisciplinary initiative that prepares graduate students to support children with high-intensity needs in early childhood special education. A grant of this size is always worthy of praise, but especially now, when this is not a typical time for funding. In today's environment, this feels more like a \$4 million grant. It will help 20 students in the cohort remove financial barriers they would otherwise face. Anyone familiar with this field knows how desperately needed this investment is. I can't thank the College of Education enough. I have multiple family members who are graduates, and Dean Dinehart is one of our very best.

I also want to recognize our radio station, 89.1 WIDR. While international recognition has become almost routine for them, it's still worth celebrating. The station has again been named a finalist for multiple awards at the 2025 International Student Broadcasting Championship, hosted by the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System. We are the only station named as a finalist in the broadcasting system category and have earned this distinction at least twice in the last five years.

If you haven't visited the studios, I encourage you to do so. It's a student-run organization doing remarkable work. They even interviewed me during Bronco Bash, which was a lot of fun.

I also want to encourage you to attend the Make a Difference Awards if you haven't recently. We were in this room yesterday. This award has been part of Western Michigan University's culture for 30 years and reflects one of our greatest strengths, lifting each other up by recognizing colleagues who make a difference.

I remember, during my last time here ten years ago, nominating a colleague and hoping he would receive the award. When he did, it was incredibly meaningful. It's a privilege to be part of this tradition.

Yesterday's recipients were: Cindy Hetrick from the College of Arts and Sciences; Joy Mills from Grants and Contracts; Teri Wagner from Building Custodial and Support Services; Emily Sharp from the Department of Psychology; Jessica Parks from Information Technology; Mary Ann Stowell from Building Custodial and Support Services; Patricia Moore from Maintenance Services; Eva Hughes from Student Engagement; and Joshua Kohnert from Student Transitions. Please join me in applauding them.

Madam Chair, two final items, and then a statement of gratitude. First, after my remarks, I'd like to invite Vice President Bartholomae to give a brief presentation on fall activities in his division. Second, since we do not have public comment today, I'd like to request permission to offer a comment in that spirit later in the meeting.

I'll close with a statement of gratitude to you. Serving as Chair of the Board is not easy, especially as a graduate of this institution. It is a weighty responsibility, but an important one. The six months we've shared at this table have been particularly meaningful to me because of how deeply you care about Western Michigan University.

This institution changed my life, and I know it changed yours. Leadership is a relay race. You take the baton, run your race as best you can, get up when you fall, cheer on those behind you, and try to keep pace with those ahead.

In just six months, you've overseen major milestones—hiring a president, beating Central Michigan, winning a MAC championship, navigating budget challenges, and guiding changes to the budget process. On behalf of graduates and those who have had the privilege of serving as president, including President Montgomery and myself, thank you for your service. You've made a difference. If I had the chance yesterday, I would have nominated you for a Make a Difference Award. Thank you for your leadership. I truly appreciate you.