

WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF GOVERNORS

December 18, 2020

The one hundred eighty-ninth meeting of the West Virginia University Board of Governors was held on December 18, 2020 in Morgantown, WV via zoom. Board members in attendance/participating by telephone included David Alvarez, Marty Becker, Charles Capito, Elmer Coppoolse, Kevin Craig, J. Thomas Jones, Dr. Patrice Harris, Dr. Stanley Hileman, Lisa A. Martin, Taunja Willis Miller, Dr. Emily Murphy, Richard Pill, Chase Riggs, Ed Robinson, Benjamin Statler, Dr. Kimberly Weaver and William Wilmoth.

Note: With this meeting being conducted via zoom, there was no way to ascertain all other participants but the following WVU officers, divisional campus officers, representatives (and others) participating included:

President, E. Gordon Gee;
Vice President, Legal, Government and Entrepreneurial Engagement, Rob Alsop;
Provost, Maryanne Reed;
Vice President and Executive Dean of Health Sciences, Clay Marsh;
General Counsel, Stephanie Taylor;
Vice President for University Relations, Sharon Martin; Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Paula Congelio;
Vice President for Research, Fred King;
Vice President for Global Strategies in Higher Education, Amber Brugnoli;
Dean of Students, Corey Farris;
Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Meshea Poore;
Vice Provost for Academic Strategies, Curriculum and Assessment,
Paul Kreider;
Associate Provost for Budget, Facilities and Strategic Initiatives, Mark Gavin;
Senior Associate Vice President for Finance, Anjali Halabe;
Associate Provost for Faculty Development and Culture, Melissa Latimer;
Assistant Provost for Curriculum and Assessment, Louis Slimak;
Teaching Assistant Professor, David Hauser;
Director, WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities / Professor, Vice-Chair,
Department of Pediatric Research, Lesley Cottrell;
Advisor to President E. Gordon Gee, Russian Studies Coordinator
Slavic and East European Studies Coordinator, Teaching Professor,
Lisa M. Di Bartolomeo;
Associate Vice President for Health Affairs; Dean of the School of Public Health, WVU
Health Sciences Center, Jeffrey Coben,
President, WVU Potomac State College, Jennifer Orlikoff; President,
WVU Tech, Carolyn Long;

Deputy General Counsel, Gary G. Furbee, II;
Director of Communications and Marketing for Strategic Initiatives, Erin
Newmeyer;
Executive Officer and Assistant Board Secretary, Jennifer Fisher; Executive
Director of Communications, University Relations, April Kaull, and,
Special Assistant to the Board of Governors, Valerie Lopez.

Members of the Press also participated.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman David Alvarez at 10:00 a.m.
A roll call was taken to determine who was in attendance and a quorum established.

Executive Session

Chairman Alvarez requested a motion to go into Executive Session, under authority in West Virginia Code §§6-9A-4(b)(2)(A) and (b)(12) to discuss:

- a. Confidential and deliberative matters relating to interim appointments to the WVU Health System Board of Directors; and
- b. Report by General Counsel

The motion was made by William Wilmoth, seconded by Lisa A. Martin and passed. Following Executive Session Richard Pill moved that the board rise from Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Marty Becker and passed.

Actions Arising From Executive Session

Chairman Alvarez reported that discussions emanating from Executive Session included consideration of Interim Appointments to the West Virginia University Health System Board of Directors and asked for a motion approving the same. Board member J. Thomas Jones moved that the WVU Board of Governors approve the appointments, as discussed in today's Executive Session, of Randy Williams to fill the vacancy on the West Virginia University Health System Board of Directors from the 1st Congressional District and also to approve the appointment of Michelle Rotellini to fill the vacancy on the West Virginia University Health System Board of Directors from the 3rd Congressional District. This motion was seconded by Elmer Coppoolse, and passed.

Academic Transformation Discussion

President Gee provided the following introductory remarks for this presentation:

These are perilous times in higher education. Across the country, there is a loss of public trust and the perceived value of higher education has diminished. We battle the national narrative of the cost of education and student debt. We have seen our campus landscapes turned into political stomping grounds. Some institutions have lost sight of the mission. We cannot allow that to happen to us. Post-pandemic, our University must come out stronger and smarter than we were heading into the pandemic. The reality is we need to improve quality while we decrease costs. We need to differentiate ourselves in the marketplace and make WVU a destination institution. I have been saying this for years. It is not a new concept, but it is one we must now address with urgency and fervor. We must build partnerships with our students and their families to underscore the lasting effects a college degree can have on one's life and the lives of their loved ones. We must redefine the narrative that is unjustly taking shape on higher education. America's universities—especially land-grant institutions—have always been agents of change. Political and economic theories emanate from our lecture halls, and scientific revolutions emerge from our laboratories. In our halls, people learn to be thinkers, skeptics, analysts and dreamers.

We know who we are as an institution. We live our core Mountaineer values. We know that we deliver quality academics and a rich student experience. We do ground-breaking research – that has been proven time and time again during this pandemic. But we face challenges as an institution. From an enrollment perspective, we know we are facing a declining student population and tough competition. We also know that families are making these decisions together and are concerned about cost, academic quality and outcomes. We need to deliver on all three. From a brand perspective, we must differentiate ourselves in the marketplace.

We must focus on market-driven majors, create areas of excellence and be highly relevant to our students and their families. To do otherwise will reduce the number of students we can attract. From a financial perspective, we know that we have lived at the margins for a long time. It is time to reallocate our dollars to the areas that will move the institution forward and create a solid financial foundation for this University.

We have faced tough times before. But this time we face them with the knowledge we have learned from the past nine months. This pandemic has taught us much. We learned we can move quickly. We can change how we do things. We can build a more diverse, equitable and inclusive community. We can lead in research that is collaborative and innovative for the betterment of all. One testament to that innovative spirit is the way the world came together to create a COVID-19 vaccine. And just like the researchers who worked together for the greater good, so must we. We must create the fundamental building blocks for success – both for our students and for our institution. And if we reflect on our core tenets as a land-grant institution, our mission for tomorrow is very clear: We must innovate and change so that we can continue to be relevant in education, research and service. And that change will lead to better lives for 1.8 million West Virginians and people around the world. I am therefore charging the Provost and our senior leadership team to lead substantive conversations and working groups on how we differentiate and lead in higher education. We must invest in reinvention, collaboration and consolidation. And as I have said before, we have infinite appetites and finite resources.

We do not want to manage a decline; we want to generate success. I do acknowledge while this may be an exciting call to action for some, it can be frightening and unnerving for others.

We cannot be fearful if we wish to thrive in the future—not just survive but thrive. If we want to be a competent, progressive institution, the time to move is now. We will approach this thoughtfully and with compassion. We will approach it with data and strategy. But we must be assertive. We have little time to waste. My charge is not meant to instill anxiety – it is meant to inspire us to be better, to do better. We will define those attributes that are uniquely WVU and we will build a bright future for our students, faculty and staff.

President Gee called upon Vice President for Strategic Initiatives, Rob Alsop, who shared the following remarks:

1. Before hitting the high points – I want to extend a public thank you for all the work relating to COVID-19
 - a. What we know is that mask wearing and social distancing reduce the likelihood of getting COVID and the severity of the illness if you do.
 - b. We conducted over 50,000 tests in the fall. We did not have a single faculty, staff, or student admitted to the hospital and we are unaware of any in-class transmission.
 - c. Financially, the work of our faculty and staff to reduce spending has allowed the University, so far, to avoid reducing take home pay and avoid large-scale layoffs or reductions in force.
2. I also want to extend a public thank you to Governor Justice for all of the support during his COVID-19 crisis and support for funding generally the past few years.
3. I want to follow-up on President Gee’s call to action and reinforce that by highlighting our financial model.
4. I want to first say that we should be proud of our University – we have accomplished a lot over the past many years:
 - a. We have created new academic programs to keep up with market trends, including a significant focus in online programming.
 - b. Our research profile has grown significantly, as has our fundraising capability;
 - c. We have made significant investments in our campuses with a number of new or renovated facilities;
 - d. We have worked with the Legislature on the freedom agenda to control costs and have more governance at the local level;
5. In short, many, many people have elevated our University over the past decades.
6. While those accomplishments have continued, as President Gee indicated, we also know that there are significant headwinds in higher education that have impacted us here at WVU:
 - a. Over the past six years, we have seen our state appropriations reduced by over \$35 million;
 - b. We are facing a declining potential student population, with more competition than ever for students;
 - c. We are facing an economy that is changing by the minute with technology upending portions of the economy like never before, and often changing our workforce needs
7. While we at WVU are strong, this landscape has taken a toll on our institution, causing us to take a variety of difficult actions:
 - a. In 2016, we began to reduce our budgeted expenses to address losses in revenue and fund increasing expenses;

- b. Year after year, we have made ends meet, but quite simply we have not had the resources we would like to invest in new programs and activities that will boost enrollment or allow us to compensate our faculty and staff where we want to;
 - c. Instead, we have continued to make broad across-the-board cuts across the University that are at times counterproductive to our long-term financial health
- 8. We are a strong institution, but the reality is we are facing a new budget model
 - a. As President Gee said, this isn't something that COVID has caused, but COVID has confirmed what we already know --
- 9. With this changing landscape, there are a few things that we believe are going to be true in higher education for quite some time:
 - a. We think it is unlikely we will see significant increases in state funding for higher education;
 - b. We think that any tuition increases that occur over the next several years will be more closely aligned to the cost of inflation (NOTE: compare previous rates with the past couple of years);
 - c. With schools competing over fewer potential students, not only will we not be making significant tuition increases, but our need to provide additional scholarships to move forward will only increase, putting more pressure on our bottom line.
 - d. Our margins have not been where they need to be, and we need to fix that.
- 10. Indeed, all of these things lead to one conclusion – our business model has changed:
 - a. While our state support is vital and any additional reductions will cause significant harm, the fact of the matter is that our financial success is going to be largely driven by our ability to continue to attract, recruit, and retain our high-caliber students, faculty, and staff.
 - b. In this environment, if we do not consistently take steps to evaluate whether every aspect of our University is cost-effective, driving enrollment, meeting a University priority, or otherwise impacting our State and region, we will quickly fall behind in this new environment.
 - c. We must make sure we are getting a good return on the investments we are making;
- 11. I know that Provost Reed will be talking about academics, but there are a number of things that we will be reviewing over time per President Gee's charge:
 - a. Undertake an analysis as to whether a portion of our workforce will continue to work from home – reducing workspace needs on campus and reducing costs on campus;
 - b. Evaluate whether our benefit packages are competitive and based on contemporary business practices;
 - c. Implement best practices for talent and culture – focusing on job families and career ladders to facilitate movement of talent across the university and to provide better alignment and modernization to the compensation structure;
 - d. Evaluate our assets and whether they support the core mission of the University;
 - e. Evaluate whether we can boost student enrollment through improvements to our student housing;
 - f. Engage in a master planning process for our capital needs that will be focused again, on improving revenue at the University;
 - g. UPDATE IT -- Many of our IT systems are legacy systems of legacy systems, with highly customized software that is neither user-friendly nor low maintenance – we will be undertaking an analysis of a roadmap to bring our University's IT system into a modern era – supporting student engagement;

- h. Evaluate our auxiliary services to see if there are ways in which we can be more efficient and effective in supporting our University experts and students;
- 12. We will be looking at ways in which we can provide support services that will make it easier for our faculty and students to do their job and focus on what they do best, while maximizing revenues for the University.
- 13. Again, our financial model has changed, and it requires us to constantly evaluate whether we need to pivot, change, or enhance what we do moving forward.

Provost Maryanne Reed provided the following remarks related to Academic Transformation:

Thank you President Gee. We've heard your charge. And we are ready to get to work, to lead academic transformation at WVU. In service of your very large and ambitious goal, my team has several *sub-goals* that we would like to achieve.

Goal 1 - Identify key areas of opportunity and investment (across our U. campuses/ HSC)

Objectives are (1) to:

- **Increase enrollment and improve student success** (by more effectively aligning our programs with market trends; and by continuing to focus on efforts to increase retention, persistence, graduation rates)
- (2) To **Provide our students with a relevant education** (one that will prepare them for the jobs of today, as well as the careers of tomorrow)
 - Creating new degree programs, graduate certificates or even micro-credentials to serve non-traditional learners.
 - That may also mean providing support to programs that are *already* growing and attracting new students to the university.
 - It may also mean making a greater investment in online instruction and online degree programs, realizing that increasingly, online instruction (pre-COVID) is the preferred form of instruction for some learners.
- Another objective is to **Create a diverse and inclusive learning environment** (one that is welcoming to all, because (a) it the right thing to do and (b)it is the smart thing to do. Much of future enrollment growth will come from diverse populations.
- We want to **Enhance our national reputation** (in a few key areas, because that will allow us to differentiate from other universities in a competitive market, and make WVU a destination for high performing students rather than making us their 2nd or 3rd choice.)
- **Strengthen and improve our R1 position** (by increasing research dollars and graduating more students from Ph.D. programs—understanding that not all doctoral programs carry the same weight in the Carnegie classification system.)

Some examples of newer undergraduate programs at WVU that appeal to a niche audience and help set us apart include: Forensics, neurosciences, supply chain management, music industry, sports & adventure media, addiction studies.

Goal 2 - Identify and implement academic efficiencies to increase student success and reallocate resources. Clearly, If we are going to invest in new programs and in student success efforts, we will need the funds to make that happen.

Some areas we will look at include:

- **Sunsetting academic programs** that may no longer be relevant; may have low enrollments; or that may have low student success factors
- We will **Consider merging academic units** if there are opportunities for significant administrative savings and for further growth and differentiation.
- We are already beginning the process of **Optimizing courses and classrooms** insuring we that are offering the right courses ((student demand)), that course sections are full, and that class sizes are appropriate for the discipline.
- We need to begin a process of **Standardizing teaching assignments** across the university to ensure that teaching “loads” are assigned appropriately and consistently *across academic units*.
- Finally, we will need to **Realign resources** to assure that, with our limited central dollars, that we are supporting those programs and units that are contributing significantly to our strategic priorities. Revisiting our budget model

Goal 3 - Revise faculty rewards and recognition structure to incentivize efforts that will enable us to become a highly effective and efficient organization.

- For example, research suggests that the majority of new cutting-edge academic programs *and* research opportunities will come from cross-disciplinary collaborations. But our current faculty rewards and recognition structure doesn't clearly incentivize **collaborative work**.
- We need to **Reward, recognize and retain highly productive faculty**. At the same time, we need to hold accountable those who are not contributing in a meaningful way to our mission. That may mean strengthening post-tenure review process.
- Finally, we want to **Identify alternative pathways to success**. Gordon feels strongly that faculty should be rewarded and recognized for their excellence and impact, whether that's by being a highly effective classroom teacher or a world-class researcher. One size does not fit all, but our processes and practices don't necessarily reflect that.

These are the goals and objectives. The next question: how do we get there? First, I think it's important to share the progress that has already been achieved to this point, to let our board that we have been working on this -- only now we know we need to accelerate the pace.

PROGRESS TO DATE

- **Since 2017, we have eliminated 59 academic majors or programs.** not a high-profile effort; much of this involved cleaning up backlog in the system, programs that haven't been admitting students in years but are still on our books; some actual eliminations/ consolidations of academic programs.

- My office, with faculty input, has instituted a **new annual program viability process**, which requires academic units to validate the success of their programs every year, rather than just when it's time for the 5-year BOG program review.
- We've also **strengthened the new program approval process**, requiring much more information up front to determine whether a new program should be created, such as market research, job data, funding sources for the program. Significantly reduced the number of new programs we are approving.
- Finally, I need to point out that the work we are about to embark upon, is building on the work we started two years ago, with our Strategic transformation process. An effort I co-lead before I became Provost, ground up effort, engaging faculty and staff across campus to envision what our campus should be in the future.

Some of the action items that came out of that work, shows that we are on a continuum and not starting from scratch:

- **Create relevant, targeted academic programs that prepare students for the changing global marketplace.**
- **Identify areas of academic and research uniqueness and advantage and invest in areas of excellence and differentiation.**
- **Sustain R1 classification through investments in technology, facilities, resources, grant-support and tech-transfer.**
- **Create a rewards and recognition structure that encourages, celebrates and rewards cross-disciplinary collaboration and cooperation.**

STRATEGIC ACTIONS So we have set the stage for this work, but we know that moving forward, we need to take an even bolder approach to strategic transformation and to accelerate our timeline

The **NEXT STEP IS TO**

- **Gather and analyze data that will inform our decision-making** (We will be looking at a variety of data, and establishing criteria that will enable us to systematically evaluate the “health” of our academic programs Chief Data Officer Lisa Castellino.
 - Data we are looking at **internally** will likely include standard success criteria, such as enrollment patterns, retention and persistence rates, and research dollars generated by the unit. More qualitative data, such as Strategic value.
 - **External** data we also need to consider includes things like what our peers our doing and offering, employment trends in the region *and* nationally, and predications about future opportunities. Working with EAB, as well as some of our brilliant faculty to identify those new areas of growth and opportunity.

- We will need to **Engage stakeholders** in the process especially our academic leaders and our faculty who will be directly impacted by these changes, knowing that we can only achieve success if we have a large degree of buy-in and support from our campus community. But with an accelerated timeline, we will need to be strategic about *when* to bring others in...and *how* they should be involved so as to keep the process moving. Deans and our faculty will be good strategic partners.
- We will then need to **Prioritize next steps** (not going to be doing everything at once. Don't want to make excuses. Pandemic, stress and strain this has put on everyone. On top of which, our campus has not done this work before. To be successful, we will need to constantly communicate what we're doing, why we're doing it and how we're doing it. Solicit and listen to feedback.
- Our goal is to **Present a first set of recommendations** – hopefully first set by June Board meeting

Academic Affairs Updates

Provost Maryanne Reed provided the following Academic Affairs Updates:

I'm pleased to report that we have successfully wrapped up another academic semester – despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

End of Fall Semester

With our shift to online learning following the Thanksgiving holiday, this meant that all finals were delivered online as well. I'm happy to tell you that online final exams went off without a hitch this December, and there were no major issues. Final grades were due this past Monday and have been posted.

December Commencement

This Saturday, the University will hold its second virtual commencement of 2020. It will begin at 11 am with opening remarks from President Gee and me, followed by a keynote address from WVU presidential honorary degree recipient and former Intuit president and CEO Brad Smith. Graduates will also hear a special message from each of their deans and have their names read aloud as the names are scrolled on the screen. We'll conclude with a virtual tassel turn and singing of "Country Roads," as has become our tradition.

And while it may not be our typical commencement, it will be a celebration, nonetheless. Our faculty, staff and students have endured nine months under the weight of the COVID-19 pandemic and have faced its challenges with grit, determination, empathy and kindness. It has been a difficult time for everyone. My team and I deeply appreciate the hard work and dedication shown by our faculty, staff, and administrators who have demonstrated a deep commitment to our students' success and concern for their well-being.

Service MVP Awards

We wouldn't have been able to cross the finish line this semester without the tireless efforts of the many Mountaineers who labored behind the scenes. In spring, we launched our Most Valuable Player Awards, recognizing 26 "Teaching MVPs" based on nominations from our students. And just yesterday, we announced our Service MVP Award recipients, honoring individuals and teams who provided a community-based approach to problem-solving, the likes of which we have never seen before.

These Service MVPs collectively created the structure, support and resources to keep our academic engine running despite a global pandemic. We have categorized their efforts in the areas of "Academic Services and Support," "Academic Scheduling" and "Campus Health and Safety." Recipients include team members from the WVU Teaching and Learning Commons, WVU Online, the Registrar's Office, the Office of Strategic Initiatives, as well as health and safety experts from across campus.

The awards were announced in ENEWS yesterday, and each of the 71 Service MVPs is listed on our new MVP awards page on the provost.wvu.edu website.

SGA Resolutions

Earlier this month, we received two assembly resolutions from the Student Government Association requesting two things. One, the addition of two non-instructional days in the upcoming Spring semester to help support student mental health. Two, that the University provide students with a pass/fail grading option, retroactively for Fall 2020, and then again in Spring 2021.

We responded positively to the students' request for extra days of "break" in Spring, particularly since we cancelled spring break due to starting one week later. And on Monday, we announced changes to the academic calendar that include two additional instruction-free days during the spring semester.

While we were able to accommodate the calendar-change request, we opted not to offer the Pass-Fail grading option for fall and spring.

Several factors contributed to this decision:

- For one: Students who had already withdrawn from courses because of concerns about lower grades (and often with an adviser's encouragement) would be at disadvantage if the pass-fail option was implemented so late in the semester.
- Second: WVU would have been in a small minority of schools to implement some type of pass/fail option for this semester. While it was a very common practice in the spring, less than 20% of our peer institutions re-instituted it for this fall.

- Finally, and perhaps, most importantly, students who may wish to pursue advanced education beyond college could be disadvantaged by having more than one pass/fail on their undergraduate transcript. We know that many academic admissions committees carefully scrutinize pass-fail grades on an applicant's transcript.

Looking Ahead to Spring

Currently, we are planning to begin Spring 2021 semester classes on January 19. As I mentioned, our spring academic calendar recently changed with the addition of two more instruction-free days, for a total of five days spread throughout the semester.

We are now providing three mid-week “non-instructional” days in February and March. The University will be closed one day in April for Spring Holiday (or Good Friday). We also added a "prep day" on the first day of finals, which pushes final exams to start a day later on Tuesday, May 4, and end on Saturday morning, May 8.

These changes leave no flexibility in our academic calendar. Because of our accreditation standards, if we should have to close campus due to weather or other reason, we will have to deliver instruction remotely on those days.

In November, during registration for spring semester, students indicated a slightly greater preference for online course offerings than we previously anticipated. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the registered seats are now in online sections, and 33% are in in-person sections. In online courses, 60% of registered seats are in synchronous (or real-time) sections, which is a 14% increase from the fall semester.

Meantime, spring enrollments are down slightly from a year ago, although we started registration two weeks later this year, which may account for some of that decrease. Students still have time to register, and more are registering every day. On the plus side, enrollment for the Winter inter-session, which starts Monday, is up 14% from last year.

Dean Updates

The search for a new dean of our College of Law has made excellent progress despite the unusual circumstances of the semester. We have a fantastic search committee, led by College of Media Dean Diana Martinelli and supported by the search firm Greenwood Asher. The committee identified five finalists for virtual interviews, which we conducted after Thanksgiving. From that very qualified and diverse pool – and based on the feedback we received on all of the candidates – President Gee and I decided to bring two of them **to** campus for a closer look.

The two candidates are Amelia Rinehart from the University of Utah and David Mitchell from the University of Missouri. Both serve as associate deans in their own law schools; both come highly recommended; and both have outstanding credentials and unique skills. (Hard choice)

Both candidates are traveling to campus – in a very safe and physically distanced way – and are meeting with small groups of faculty, administrators, staff, alumni and legal professionals – following all safety protocols.

And finally, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the passing of our own beloved Dr. Keith Bailey, who served the dean of WVU Online. He passed away on December 2nd, after an extended battle with cancer. He was a wonderful colleague – creative, collaborative, unfailingly positive, and always kind. But Keith was so much more than a colleague. He was an inspiration, a ray of sunshine on a dark day, and a force of “good” in this world. He never let an opportunity to connect with others pass him by. Keith was a father, a husband, a brother and a son. He was a coach, a leader and a friend. He baked apple pies. And he never quite mastered the trombone, although he tried. Keith will be sorely missed by his WVU family — and he leaves big shoes to fill. Currently, WVU Online is being ably run and managed by Julie Thalman, WVU Online’s executive director, and Tracey Beckley, the assistant dean of Teaching and Learning. Because of their able leadership, we can take our time to determine how to permanently fill the position – something we will begin to address in earnest this spring.

**Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for Amendments to
West Virginia University Board of Governors Talent
and Culture Rule 3.4 – Drug and Alcohol Testing for
FTA and FMSCA Covered Positions**

General Counsel Stephanie Taylor provided the information for this agenda item:

The proposed changes are to amend current BOG Rule 3.4 to comply with federal regulations that expanded the list of required drugs to be tested and to clarify and add certain drug-related prohibitions not addressed in the Rule as originally adopted.

Substantively, the proposed changes to the Rules above will result in additions or amendments as set forth in detail in the table located in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.

Following the issuance of the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, the proposed changes to the Rules would normally be posted for the required thirty (30) day public comment period from December 21, 2020 through January 20, 2021. However, given the holiday break would occur during this 30-day period, we will extend the public comment until January 29, 2021 to give individuals additional time to comment, if needed. The Board of Governors is asked to approve the issuance of the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, as presented.

Whereupon Taunja Willis Miller moved that the West Virginia University Board of Governors approves the issuance of a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, as presented, pursuant to BOG Governance Rule 1.1. The motion was seconded by J. Thomas Jones and passed.

Committee Report

December 18, 2020 Finance and Facilities and Revitalization Committee Meeting:

Committee Chairman Marty Becker stated this committee met this morning, primarily in Executive Session, wherein interim updates were provided on a variety of financial matters, and that no action was taken as a result of these discussions.

President's Report

President Gee offered the following comments:

Commencement

Tomorrow, the Mountaineer nation will gather virtually to honor August and December West Virginia University graduates. Of all that I miss about normal on-campus life, seeing our graduates' joyful faces up close and personal ranks near the top. Like every other ritual transformed by the pandemic, tomorrow's ceremony will be unlike anything our graduates ever imagined. But it will remind us that connecting with others is meaningful and moving whether it takes place at the Coliseum or across cyberspace. Throughout this year, our community has bonded as never before through resiliency, determination and compassion.

Vaccine

As difficult as 2020 has been for many people, we see hope on the horizon. The work of innovators around the world is making COVID 19 vaccines available and putting a more normal life within view. We expect to receive COVID-19 vaccine doses for our employees, potentially starting as early as December 27 based on a phased distribution plan developed by the West Virginia Joint Interagency Task Force. I appreciate the Governor Justice's leadership through this critical process, and West Virginia University is ready to assist the State in any way we can with vaccine distribution. Dr. Marsh was going to provide an COVID update but is currently on the governor's COVID call. I am confident that everything is in good hands with his exceptional leadership. I am hopeful the new year will bring us brighter days. And if all continues as planned for wide-spread vaccinations, I believe we can return to a new normal on campus in the fall. And that is a wonderful way to begin 2021—knowing that we will all be together again soon.

So, even at seemingly dark moments, bright new paths open before us. That is true for the Class of 2020, and it is true for all of us. Best wishes to all for a happy, healthy and safe holiday season.

Consent Agenda

Chairman Alvarez called for any discussion of today's Consent Agenda items and asked whether any items needed to be pulled for a separate discussion/vote. There being no such request made Kevin Craig moved that today's Consent Agenda be approved. This motion was seconded by Lisa A. Martin and passed.

Thereupon, the following Consent Agenda items were approved:

1. Approval of New Graduate Certificate in Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) in the School of Nursing

Resolved: That the West Virginia University Board of Governors approves the creation of a new graduate certificate in Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner within the School of Nursing.

2. Approval of New Graduate Certificate in Online Teaching in the College of Education and Human Services

Resolved: That the West Virginia University Board of Governors approves the creation of a graduate certificate in Online Teaching within the College of Education and Human Services.

3. Proposed Extension of the Special Emergency Leave Plan

Resolved: That the West Virginia University Board of Governors authorizes the President and his team to implement the Special Emergency Leave Plan, as amended, for an additional 90 calendar days.

Discussion and Adjournment

Chairman Alvarez announced that the Board will conduct its next regular meeting on February 19, 2021, and that this meeting will likewise be conducted virtually. He expressed his appreciation for all of the hard work being undertaken and positive results being generated. He thanked everyone for attending today's meeting and wished everyone a joyous holiday season. There being no further business to come before the Board, William Wilmoth moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Richard Pill and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Taunja Willis Miller, Secretary