

WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF GOVERNORS

December 20, 2024

The two hundred twenty seventh meeting of the West Virginia University Board of Governors was held on December 20, 2024 in Morgantown, WV, in person and via zoom webinar. Board members in attendance/participating via zoom included Chair Richard Pill and members Charles Capito, Bray Cary, Dr. Lesley Cottrell, Elmer Coppoolse, Kevin Craig, Michael D'Annunzio, Dr. Patrice Harris, Rusty Hutson, Alan Larrick, Susan Lavenski, Charlie Long, Paul Mattox, Shirley Robinson, Steve Ruby, Frankie Tack, and Robert Reynolds.

Other participants included:

President, E. Gordon Gee;

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, ; General Counsel,
Stephanie Taylor;

Interim Vice President for Strategic Communications and Marketing,
Heather Richardson;

Vice President and Executive Dean of Health Sciences, Clay Marsh;

Vice President for Research, Fred King;

Dean of Students, Corey Farris;

Deputy General Counsel and Executive Director of Real Estate Operations,
Gary Furbee;

Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Paula Congelio;

Senior Associate Vice President for Finance, Barbara Weiss;

Vice President for Economic Innovation, James Hoyer;

Associate Vice President, Institutional Data and Analytics, Lisa
Castellino-Gergich;

Associate Vice President, Government Relations and Collaboration,
Travis Mollohan;

Interim Vice President, Enrollment Management, Steve Hahn;

Director of Communications, Office of the Provost, Kimberly Becker;

Associate Vice President for Strategic Partnerships, Erin Newmeyer;
Executive Officer and Assistant Board Secretary, Jennifer Fisher;
Executive Director of Communications, University Relations,
April Kaul;
Director of News Communications, Shauna Johnson; 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 Chair Richard Pill at 10:55 a.m. A roll call was taken to determine who was in attendance and a quorum established.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Pill requested a motion to move Executive Session, under authority in West Virginia Code Sections 6-9A-4(b)(2)(A), (b)(9) (b)(10) and (b)(12) to discuss:

- a. Approval of Honorary Degree Candidates;
- b. Potential strategic initiatives relating to academic and administrative priorities; personnel matters; legislative matters; corporate collaborations and financial matters relating to public private partnerships, and other deliberative matters involving commercial competition which, if made public, might adversely affect the financial or other interest of the University;
- c. Confidential and preliminary matters involving or affecting the University's budget for the current and upcoming academic year, including retention and enrollment; and,
- d. A confidential and privileged report by General Counsel.

Kevin Craig so moved, which motion was seconded by Steve Ruby and passed. Following Executive Session, Charles Capito moved that the board rise from Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Kevin Craig and passed.

Upon returning to public session, Chair Pill reported as follows: During today's Executive Session the board reviewed names of individuals submitted for Honorary Degrees from West Virginia University. Each year nominations are received and reviewed by a committee of faculty, staff and students. Those selected by the committee are then forwarded to the Faculty Senate for approval, and then to the governing board. The WVU Faculty Senate has endorsed the names discussed during today's Executive Session, as required by University policy. I would also note, for the record, that myself, and board members Charlie Long, Frankie Tack and Shirley Robinson abstained from the vote on today's Honorary Degree Candidates – since we were members of the Honorary Degree Selection Committee involved in this process. At this time, I will request a motion for Approval of the Honorary Degree Candidates discussed during today's Executive Session - with a notation that the persons to be honored will be announced at a later date. Paul Mattox so moved, which motion was seconded by Charles Capito, and passed.

Chair Pill also stated that other than the above, there were no actions arising from today's Executive Session discussions.

INFORMATION ITEMS

There were no questions or concerns expressed by any board member pertaining to the Information Items contained within today's agenda.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Kevin Craig, chair of this committee, made the following report:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Earlier this morning, there was a meeting of the Finance, Facilities and Revitalization Committee. We met in Executive Session to discuss:

1. Potential strategic initiatives relating to academic and administrative priorities;
2. Personnel matters;

3. Financial matters relating to vendor agreements and public private partnerships; and
4. Other deliberative matters involving commercial competition.

No actions or votes were taken during Executive Session.

As we round out this year, the Finance and Facilities and Revitalization committee looks forward to entering 2025 with a continued emphasis of priorities that support faculty recruitment and development, and student enrollment and retention.

After a productive morning, the Finance and Facilities and Revitalization committee adjourned.

That concludes my report, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

UPDATE ON PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH

Dr. Patrice Harris, Chair of the Search Committee, provided the following report:

The search process continues to be on track. Members of the Search Committee met yesterday (December 19) and, from a pool of very talented candidates, selected candidates for the first round of interviews. Those interviews are planned for next month. We continue on track for finalist interviews to occur during the Winter 2025 time frame and the announce the 27th President of West Virginia University in the Spring of 2025.

That concludes my report, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Gee offered the following remarks:

As 2024 comes to an end, West Virginia University is strong and well positioned for greater future success.

A recent report from S&P Global Ratings has confirmed our financial position and long-term outlook.

The University maintained its A credit rating with S&P and a “stable” outlook, noting the University’s flagship land-grant status, diverse program offerings, good geographic diversity, and rising state operating appropriations the past two years along with additional state funds for capital support.

In particular, S&P stated the A rating is supported by a diverse revenue base, healthy fundraising success and “improvements in selectivity the past three years, solid retention and graduation rates, and status of the highest Carnegie research classification” despite continued enrollment pressures aligned with broader higher education trends.

We recently announced our total fall headcount enrollment, which is 25,994 for the WVU System and 23,641 on the Morgantown campus.

In keeping with national trends, this represents a slight decrease from last fall. But because we expected and planned for this landscape, our enrollment is less than one percent below our budgeted projections.

Moreover, our enrollment picture contains many bright spots that numbers alone cannot convey:

- Our first-time freshmen class is more diverse than the class of 2023
- We have a larger representation of first-generation students than in past years
- We have increased transfer student enrollment and help to ease the transition through student success wrap-around services and new programs like WVU Degree Up.

Looking ahead, applications are up 19 percent from this time last year.

We maintain an affordability advantage, with a West Virginia University degree costing 29 percent less than the national four-year institution average.

We are also ensuring that most students who start here leave with their degrees. Our freshmen retention rate this year is 83.4 percent, our highest ever, a testament to the dedication and care of our advisors and faculty.

Our students' achievements also testify to the quality education we provide.

Since Thanksgiving, I have also heard from people across the country praising the artistry of the Mountaineer Marching Band. Their appearance in the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade reinforced their status as "the Pride of West Virginia."

Recently, we also hosted our inaugural reunion of former and current Bucklew and Foundation Scholars – winners of our top academic awards. It was wonderful to welcome past scholars to campus and to see their success in so many professions. All of them emphasized the transformative role of the scholarship and their West Virginia University education.

Tomorrow we will launch a new group of talented graduates into the world, and I have no doubt that they will find similar success.

Our ceremonies will celebrate Mountaineer determination, as we recognize graduates and confer Presidential Honorary Degrees on three outstanding role models:

- The "dean" of West Virginia broadcasters, Hoppy Kercheval
- Leading software development and investment management executive Nick Kumbhani
- And Tyler County special education teacher David Riggle, who extends our recent tradition of honoring great West Virginia school teachers.

The future is bright. Our University is strong. We are facing the headwinds of higher education with clear eyes and a determined spirit going into 2025.

Best wishes for safe and happy holidays.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Pill 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 Steve Ruby and passed.

Thereupon, the following Consent Agenda items were approved:

- 1. Approval and execution of three Statements of Work (“SOW”), under a Master Service Agreement (“MSA”) dated November 29, 2022, for audit, assurance, and other services provided by CliftonLarsonAllen LLP (“CLA”), WVU’s external auditor, to West Virginia University (“WVU”) and West Virginia University Research Corporation (WVURC”)**
Resolved: The following SOWs will be executed under the MSA by the Audit Committee Chair, Robert Reynolds. Each SOW describes the scope of the specific professional services to be provided by CLA, and fees for such services:

 1. SOW – Audit Services for WVU as of June 30, 2025.
 2. SOW – Audit Services for the WVU Research Corporation as of June 30, 2025
 3. SOW – Agreed Upon Procedures (“AUP”) for WVU as of December 31, 2024

- 2. Cary Gym Training Center Upgrades**
Resolved That the West Virginia University Board of Governors approves this project, as presented.

- 3. Naming of WVU Baseball Indoor Facility**
Resolved That the West Virginia University Board of Governors approves the official naming of the WVU Baseball indoor facility currently under construction at the Ken Kendrick Family Ballpark as the “WVU Baseball Biomechanics and Performance Center”.

- 4. Authorizing Resolution of the West Virginia University Board of Governors for the financing of the second phase of the Information Technology Platform Modernization Plan of West Virginia University (the “Phase II Modernization Plan”); and reimbursement of related costs incurred prior to issuance of financing bonds**
Resolved: That the West Virginia University Board of Governors approves the execution of an Authorizing Resolution for the financing of the Phase II Modernization Plan through the issuance of Revenue Bonds in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$30,000,000; and reimbursement of related costs incurred prior to issuance of such bonds.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION AND
ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Pill announced that the next planned board meeting is scheduled for February 21, 2025. There being no further business to come before the board, Rusty Hutson moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Charles Capito and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Robert Reynolds, Secretary

