

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Minutes of the Retreat
July 16, 2010

The meeting of the Board of Trustees of Western Illinois University convened at 8:30 A.M. at Horn Field Lodge, on the campus of Western Illinois University – Macomb. Trustee J. Michael Houston, Chair, presided.

The following trustees were present to answer roll call:

Trustee Christopher G. Bronson
Trustee Carolyn J. Ehlert Fuller
Trustee William L. Epperly
Trustee Donald W. “Bill” Griffin
Trustee J. Michael Houston
Trustee Steven L. Nelson

Also in attendance:

President Alvin Goldfarb
Retreat Facilitator Jane Pierson
Administrative Assistant Kerry Lemaster

Opening Remarks

Chair Houston opened with remarks. What as individuals would you like to see to improve our operation or how can we as a Board do a better job. This is a great opportunity for discussion.

President Goldfarb echoed Chair Houston’s remarks. We also want to accent the positives of the Board. This is a good Board that pushes on the President in a very good and positive way. As we transition to the next President, we need to look at how he/she will work with the Board. That is one of today’s goals. How does the transition work? How does the Board work with the incoming President so he/she engages with each Trustee?

Chair Houston expanded on President Goldfarb’s remarks in terms of Presidential transition. Retreat Facilitator Jane Pierson also discussed the transition and the Board’s working with the President.

Jane Pierson reviewed the agenda for the Retreat.

Activity – Look back at the last year. What are we proud of? What are our challenges?

Proud of: Groundbreaking in Quad Cities, Passage of Capital Bill (2nd highest recommendation of all Universities), opening of Caxton Building, four-year Nursing program, distance learning, museum studies program, expansion of opportunities for out-of-state students on bordering states to pay in-state tuition, 2nd year of Mississippi River Conference, partnership with the Corp of Engineers and related yearly trip (which could result in resources), new contract with the faculty, permanent appointment of Vice President for Quad Cities, \$40 million raised in campaign, turnaround in summer enrollment, opening of the Multicultural Center, opening of the Veterans Center, name of athletics to Leathernecks.

Most Challenging: cash flow, admissions, athletics, lack of support from the state, students moving to different grading system, student relationship to the community has deteriorated, infrastructure, deferred maintenance

Update by the President

Summer school enrollment is up, distance learning is up 50%. Next summer WIU will advertise in the newspapers of some of our larger Illinois universities. Enrollment is slightly down in Macomb, but more stable in past. In fall, Freshman class will be up. Working with Noel-Levitz should really begin to help our numbers. Transfer student numbers will likely be up. Construction budget is out and we are pushing for addition of Performing Arts Center to upcoming capitol bill. Memorial Hall should be done by the start of the spring semester.

The number one goal is to manage cash flow. We are owed \$17 million for last fiscal year by the state. We can borrow and have been working through that process. The President has released only 25% of the operating budget. All purchases over \$500 have to approved by Vice Presidents or President. We've held back on travel. All positions are being reviewed by the Vice President and President before being filled. The President has asked the campus to reduce its budgets by 3.5%. We are looking at curricular issues, such as a doctorate in environmental studies, but have to really review in terms of budgets and timing. Another goal is the transition. The final goal for the President is to make it to June 30, 2011.

Chair Houston discussed the cash flow issues for the state and what that really means.

Review the Mission, Vision, Primary Strategies

The Board reviewed the mission, vision, values and the statement of mutual expectations. Questions were asked about the wording the WIU Mission. Trustee Ehlert Fuller asked what the Board is doing in terms of the first item in the Board's roles and responsibilities (work with the President to provide strategy and direction for the institution). We have challenges and realities. Is our model sustainable? It is important to think about this now with a new President coming. Should we be focusing more on this strategy question and direction question?

The President said there are three models: 1) traditional residential model (WIU has that in Macomb); 2) the urban-commuter campus model (WIU is going to become a leader of that in this part of the state); 3) the distance model (WIU is actually having success in this model. We have more students enrolled here than U of I did.). The strategy is the balance. How do you keep things in equilibrium without destroying any part of that model. WIU needs to exist in that tri-fold model. The model is all sustainable. The question is what proportions are sustainable and what is the transformation? What is the return on investment?

The President agreed there are a ways to go in putting the models together.

Trustee Houston discussed we have two strategies as a university, one in Macomb and one in the Quad Cities. But WIU is one university. It is a matter of what we offer and how we offer it.

The bigger question – is the Board is agreement that these are the three big streams we have? Is the Board clear about the business decisions of each of these three streams and the business case for each stream as they think about balance? In the transition, will we have someone that “gets it,” ex. the case for an urban campus, a traditional model and a distance model?

Trustee Nelson commented that the three-pronged model is perfect for us. That's how we sell our university. We have something to offer everyone.

Chair Houston reminded that when President Goldfarb began that the Board stated it was important to build the Quad Cities campus, but not at the expense of Macomb. The Quad Cities would need to step up in terms of providing resources. And this has been done.

The Board is satisfied with the three models. It is new for the Board and WIU to look at these three models in terms of business decisions. Trustee Ehlert Fuller asked what are we doing as we add new programs to reduce everything below? We can't just add new programs without taking something else away. The programs are intermeshed and the university has protocols.

President Goldfarb answered there are two sides. There is the way you really do it and the way you'd like to do it. You make decisions using a business model while realizing some areas have to stay in place. But you reallocate resources, ex. in terms of filling positions. The Provost has been very good about this.

President Goldfarb believes that distance learning is not a sustainable model for the traditional 18-22 year old student. There is a need for students, especially those new to college, for time in the classroom. He worries about substituting too much distance in some places. In other places it works well.

Universities are a very difficult business model because there are some things you have to do that are never cost effective.

Trustee Griffin believes we are in a good position because we have aspects of all three. But that does not mean we are trying to equally sustain all three. He discussed the history of the three aspects at WIU.

President Goldfarb explained the model of how does our cost relate to the cost of similar programs around the state? What seems to be appropriate in terms of cost expenditure? How much do similar programs produce in contrast to us (ex. a program at EIU compared to a program at WIU). Decisions regarding allocations and resources are made accordingly. You don't compare programs to each other – you compare a program to other programs like itself at other institutions. Maybe the Board needs to ask for this more often?

The Board would like to see cost comparisons as well as see where our students come from, by county, annually.

Trustee Ehlert Fuller commented the Provost's Signature Programs have gone a long way to providing more focus.

President Goldfarb would like to know what kinds of reports the Board would like to hear to help with understanding in terms of costs, admissions, etc.

Maybe a cost overview should be a regular part of future Board Retreats?

Update on Search and Leadership Transition

Trustee Epperly updated the Board. Search committee met in April and May. Korn/Ferry (KFI) is now in candidate development, as planned. As of several weeks ago, they had a list of approximately 200 names they had or would be contacted. They indicated having high level of interaction with 14 people. KFI was given a suggested pay range by the Board so they could discuss with candidates. Of course, the numbers given are negotiable. KFI also has a list of the "perks" of the job, such as a residence, retirement and insurance. The goal is to have a short list of candidates for the committee to look at in September. October and November will continue first round interviews with the intent of coming back to the Board in December for 2nd interviews of candidates.

The Board discussed the benefits and challenges for the incoming President. They discussed timeline.

The Board's Role in bringing in a new leader needs to be discussed. The President also discussed the transition, especially in June in relation to the University Residence and other related items. The Board needs to determine what role the President plays, what the incoming person plays and they play in the transition.

Trustee Epperly indicated the Board should be thinking about what its expectations are for the incoming President. That discussion will need to be held, maybe before interviews? Do we want to put benchmarks for the new President? This is not common in higher education. Instead, there are stated goals. Trustee Ehlert Fuller added when President Goldfarb was hired, there was a statement of expectations that served as the basis for all his evaluations.

What will the Board be doing when the new person comes on? What is the Board's role? How will the Board handle it?

Selection – Announcement. Heavily attended. Media in attendance. Kerry will look at the 2002 documents to see how the Board handled. If the Board decides in December, might need a separate press conference before March meeting. Trustee Bronson offered to introduce the new President to various student groups and/or others.

President suggested meeting a group and then one-on-ones with Vice Presidents and Deans. Meet with the leaders of the student government organizations. When President Goldfarb arrived he visited every academic department and tried to visit as many non-academic departments as well. Their instincts may lead them in the direction they choose in terms of meeting campus and outside entities and people. Trustee Bronson will try to invite the new President to varying opportunities and will work with the Office of Student Activities in determining what the new President can be invited to. President Goldfarb suggested asking Dave Steelman to set some meetings in Springfield with legislative leaders. President Goldfarb would be happy to assist as necessary. Jane Pierson suggested the person transitioning in should also have a plan for his/her transition. The transition has external and internal pieces. Chair Houston reminded the Board that President Goldfarb can be a very useful resource. President Goldfarb strongly suggested continuing the one-on-ones with the Board each summer. Trustee Epperly said this could be part of the expectations. Trustee Nelson would like the new President to continue to talk to the Board before each meeting as President Goldfarb does now. Chair Houston is in charge of the transition.

Kerry will look at the candidate evaluation forms from 2001.

Kerry will look for the 2001 document of expectations and share with Board.

Legislative Issues

Status of Capital Bill was discussed, including the Quad Cities Riverfront Campus and Performing Arts Center. President Goldfarb reported WIU is working on its 2012 budget request and that will come to the Board at its next meeting.

Quad Cities Campus

Discussion of budget, expenses, etc. between the Macomb and Quad Cities Campuses. The Board discussed alumni relations in the Quad Cities. The President will discuss with VP Rives.

Board Roles and Responsibilities – Board Operations

The Board looked at its roles and responsibilities and made adjustments as appropriate. Kerry Lemaster will edit all the documents per the Board's request and send to the Board for review and approval.

The Board discussed the Assistant to the Student Member of the Board of Trustees. Trustee Bronson can talk to the Student Governments of each campus and then bring the student thoughts back to the Board.

The Board will not conduct a full Presidential Evaluation this coming year as President Goldfarb is retiring.

The Board named its committee members as follows:

Academic and Student Services: Trustee Griffin, Chair & Trustee Bronson

Audit: Trustee Epperly, Chair & Trustee Griffin

Finance: Trustee Nelson, Chair & Trustee Ehlert Fuller

Presidential Evaluation and Assessment: Trustee Nelson, Chair

Ex-Officio Member of Foundation Board: Trustee Nelson

The Board reviewed its Report Card. Should the Board receive observations from the President and Vice Presidents, Area Directors and President's Staff regarding their performance? The President will talk to each group to see if this something they would be comfortable doing. The types of questions asked would be important. The President will also ask groups what questions they would suggest being most appropriate.

Are there ways in which the Board might improve meetings, improve the way they work together or improve efficiencies? President Goldfarb commented that per the morning's conversation, there would be more reporting on business operations. Maybe the President can talk to the Board chair earlier on regarding the agenda. Chair Houston asked if the Board should be meeting more frequently – especially with a new President, is this something desirable.

Trustee Griffin asked if the Trustees might want to address what they feel as important at the start of each meeting. Trustee Ehlert Fuller added that any Trustee can speak to the Chair in terms of their feelings and positions on issues. Trustee Griffin indicated a public reminder of that from the Chair at each meeting might be valuable. Trustee Nelson commented that saying the feelings of the Board would indicate consensus of the full Board, when that might not always be the case. Jane Pierson commented this would be difficult for the Chair to do. Trustee Griffin thought this would show how the Board is engaged. President Goldfarb mentioned another Board does something somewhat similar at their Board meetings. Such statements from the Board would demonstrate they are watching what is going on at WIU. Jane Pierson modeled ways the Board Chair could make those declarations within the Chair's comments. Trustees will give brief comments at the meetings if they'd like.

The Board discussed its current meeting schedule and whether the need exists to meet more often. Kerry Lemaster will benchmarking how often Board Meetings are held at other institutions. Jane Pierson discussed the differences overall in how often Boards meet.

In terms of transition, Trustee Bronson asked if a transition team is needed.

President Goldfarb recommended not necessarily needing more meetings with the incoming President. Maybe those Trustees on the Search Committee and the Board Chair can become more directly involved with the new President.

Kerry Lemaster asked about Board Socials and Dinners. Chair Houston said it is a chance to interact with the Vice Presidents and governance leaders. The Board would prefer to get around to facilities on campus, would like to cut back on meal a little bit. The Board suggests one social at the University Residence, one in building on campus, one in residence hall.

Closing – Most Helpful for this Meeting

Trustee Griffin said it was an excellent meeting. Trustee Nelson said it is always enjoyable to meet and share ideas with other Board members. Trustee Epperly enjoyed discussing things you don't normally get to at a regular Board meeting. Trustee Bronson said the most helpful thing was meeting the other Trustees and understanding his perspective and was helpful to assimilate to the Board. Chair Houston thought we had discussion that would not have happened otherwise and that is good. President Goldfarb thought the transition discussion was useful and taking a look in ways in which we operate the Board leads to a sense of helping the President coming in. Trustee Ehlert Fuller appreciated the frank discussion and planning that would have had to be discussed later but now have discussed ahead in an organized way. Kerry Lemaster got more clarity as to Board and Presidential needs. Jane Pierson discussed how working with our Board has helped us work with other Boards and her mentorship from Al. President Goldfarb also enjoyed getting email responses from others (ex. VP Rives) on issues before the meeting even ended.

Chair Houston thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

J. Michael Houston, Chair

Kerry L. Lemaster, Administrative Assistant to the Board