

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

October 11, 2024

Western Illinois University

Macomb, Illinois

Special Meeting

The meeting of the Board of Trustees of Western Illinois University convened at 10:00am on October 11, 2024 in the Macomb Union, Capitol Room. Chair, Carin Stutz presided.

October 11, 2024 – University Union, Capitol Room, Macomb

Trustee moved to convene to open session at 10:00 am.

Motion: Trustee Wise

Second: Trustee Lang

Roll Call

Trustee Doug Shaw	Yes
Trustee Erika Lowe Mullins	NA
Trustee Kirk Dillard	Yes
Trustee Carin Stutz	Yes
Trustee Kisha Lang	Yes
Trustee Cody Cornell	Yes
Trustee Derek Wise	Yes
Trustee Polly Radosh	Yes

Motion approved.

The following Trustees were present:

Trustee Cody Cornell
Trustee Derek Wise
Trustee Polly Radosh
Trustee Doug Shaw
Trustee Kirk Dillard
Trustee Carin Stutz
Trustee Kisha Lang

The following Trustee was on-line:

Trustee Erika Lowe Mullins

Motion to allow Trustee Lowe Mullins to appear remotely pursuant to Open Meetings Act, 5 ILCS 120/7(ii)

Motion: Trustee Cornell

Second: Trustee Wise

Roll Call

Trustee Kirk Dillard	Yes
Trustee Carin Stutz	Yes
Trustee Kisha Lang	Yes
Trustee Cody Cornell	Yes
Trustee Derek Wise	Yes
Trustee Polly Radosh	Yes
Trustee Doug Shaw	Yes
Trustee Erika Lowe Mullins	Yes

Motion approved.

Also present for the meeting of the Board of Trustees:

Interim President, Kristi Mindrup

Interim Legal Counsel, Victoria Smith

Senior Executive Assistant to the President, Athena Brooks

Public Comments

Patrick McGinty

- We are all friends but we differ
- We share one goal and that is to see Western Illinois University succeed
- Challenger launch decision under conditions in which normal practices or policies were not perceived to apply

Trustee Erika Lowe Mullins joined the meeting via Zoom

- The first resolution is to appoint a committee to determine whether Dr. Mindrup should have the interim title removed
- The proposed composition of that committee is wrong, there is not enough faculty representation on that committee
- If the question before this committee is to forego a search, we should be treating it like a search
- We understand why; searches are expensive, they are time consuming and committed but our future president should be vetted
- You are about to launch the Challenger because you're ignoring your own practices and policies
- Ensure that the faculty voice is heard

Merrill Cole

- I wish to speak as the sitting Chapter President of University Professionals of Illinois and I just want to be included in this process
- Jeremy Robinett, who is going to speak after me wants to be included in this process, he is the President of Faculty Senate

- I urge you to bring the faculty and other members of our community into this discussion more fully whatever procedure you decide to follow

Jeremy Robinett

- The last time I stood up here I asked for the Board's help in getting the administration to engage in meaningful processes that could facilitate shared governance and begin to rebuild trust
- The Faculty Senate recent meetings have become more productive and more information has been shared more willingly by the Provost and other administrators
- We have taken some steps towards more collaborative action
- Summary of questions asked would be, “Has the Board already decided on making this appointment?” that is a question I did not presume to answer, but hope you will address today
- I will share three opinions I heard from senators. 1) some folks were adamantly opposed to either Dr Mindrup or Dr Mossman having interim removed from their job title 2) in the interest of saving money I wouldn't mind an appointment for the position 3) the full appointment of Dr. Mindrup will allow her to implement a new direction for the University, reestablishing that sense of healing
- If you adopt this resolution I would ask the Board, the chair of the committee and the committee members themselves to commit to an inclusive process
- Seek opinions from not only the loudest cheerleaders and the most vocal detractors but also from underrepresented populations and individuals who fear that speaking up may cost them their jobs or negatively impact their work environment

Written comments read by Interim Legal Counsel, Victoria Smith.

Julie Cox

- Regarding the permanent hire of Dr. Mindrup as president, our university does not have the time nor the resources for a lengthy, drawn-out search. She has been a member of the WIU community for 2+ decades. She clearly cares about the institution.
- As a faculty member and UPI member, it is my opinion that she should be made “permanent” immediately.

William Thompson

- Kristi Mindrup is personable, intelligent, and hardworking
- She hasn't articulated any vision for WIU larger than stabilizing the budget, which won't solve WIU's problems
- WIU fails to persuade students to pay sufficient tuition
- When faced with the question of whether to go to WIU students choose other schools
- We lack a compelling story or vision for the future
- Let Dr. Mindrup compete with her peers from across the country through the traditional search process. During this process, she can come up with a vision for the school's future that will compete with the visions of other candidates.
- This process will take time. Presidential searches always do. Meanwhile, though, we will have the talents of Dr. Mindrup to manage the school. If she's as capable as you believe, then leaving her in place during the search will do no harm.

Sherry Lindquist

- Urge the Board not to bypass the normal procedures of hiring by appointing Dr. Mindrup the next president of Western Illinois University without a national search
- It gives the appearance that the Board wishes to cut off discussion of an issue that is important to everyone and not interested in getting buy-in from the community
- It implies contempt for diverse views and for the principle of shared governance
- It will undercut the legitimacy and authority of the future president
- Holding a national search is a longstanding precedent and minimum requirement of all higher education institutions
- WIU's reputation is suffering
- Inexplicable destruction of essential and successful programs
- Firing of all of our librarians, that deprives our students
- By hiring Dr. Mindrup without a national search you are doing her a disservice
- You imply that you do not think she could compete against national candidates
- You kneecap her as a leader
- These actions imply the Board does not believe a woman could compete for the position
- Dr. Mindrup deserves to know she holds her job after making a strong case that her qualifications recommend her over other applicants

Peter Cole

- I write as someone who has proudly worked at WIU since 2000 and, last year, served as the University Distinguished Professor.
- I'm stunned and insulted that the BOT would hijack the long-established process to conduct a search
- Including a single faculty voice is essentially packing the committee with people who will dutifully follow along
- There might be no more important hire than a president so selecting the interim president to be the actual president without a competitive search is the equivalent of a coup d'etat!
- Prior to Dr. Mindrup's appointment, she had zero experience in such an important position
- The notion that a presidential search conducted with essentially no faculty input is also insulting
- Universities are not corporations and shouldn't be managed in the same ways
- Do not further depress faculty morale by imposing a new president without a national search

Chairperson's Remarks

Mrs. Carin Stutz, Chair

- Thank everyone for being here today
- Take a few minutes to address some of the commentary we have received in regards to search procedures
- The Board has received considerable feedback from the campus community on the possibility of appointing Dr. Mindrup as the permanent president of WIU
- Given the volume of feedback, and the highly positive nature of comments we have received, the Board would open the search process with a consideration of the possibility of a permanent appointment
- Our intent is to determine whether the comments received are a vocal minority, or whether this is the option of the campus community
- We have not made a decision to permanently appoint Dr. Mindrup

- Review of the campus community is the first step
- A small group of people have suggested that the Board has betrayed the established traditional qualifications for the president
- Every member of the Board deeply respects these qualifications and ordinarily they would be definitive but there are other matters to consider
- WIU’s current fiscal and leadership challenges, some consideration should be given to alternative credentials, such as extraordinary leadership skills and uncommon knowledge and insight
- Dr. Mindrup has exhibited these uncommon credentials, which is why the Board will consider a permanent appointment
- If Dr. Mindrup had not had the knowledge, insight, and depth of experience to act as she did over the last six months, we might not be sitting in this room today
- I cannot overstate how serious the circumstances were when she took over
- Dr. Mindrup’s leadership deserves our consideration, despite long established traditional criteria
- I want to reiterate that the Board has not pre-decided this appointment
- We want to know whether those who hope for a permanent appointment are a vocal minority, or whether those who resist permanency in favor of traditional criteria are the vocal minority
- The Board needs more information before we decide whether a search is necessary or advisable
- We will establish a procedure for assessing the campus opinions in this meeting

President’s Remarks

Interim President Kristi Mindrup

- Happy Homecoming weekend
- It is an honor and privilege to serve WIU as the Interim President
- I was motivated to serve because I was called on at a critical time for WIU
- Insuring a stable future for our employees and students is close to my heart
- You all are important to me
- I did not seek out this position and I am willing to serve at the interest of the community, faculty, staff, students, stake holders, and alumni or step aside for another process to unfold
- I appreciate the support of the Board and so many others
- I encourage full participation from the University community on these important next steps
- I will talk more about our current priorities, initiatives and plans in the retreat
- Thank you all for caring so deeply

Resolutions and Action Items

Action

Resolution No. 24.10/1
 Establishing Committee to Assess Presidential Appointment
 (Legal Counsel, Victoria Smith)
 Motion: Trustee Lang
 Second: Trustee Cornell

Action

Roll Call

Trustee Erika Lowe Mullins Yes

Trustee Cody Cornell	Yes
Trustee Derek Wise	Yes
Trustee Polly Radosh	Yes
Trustee Doug Shaw	Yes
Trustee Kirk Dillard	Yes
Trustee Carin Stutz	Yes
Trustee Kisha Lang	Yes

Open for discussion - Originally proposed, the Resolution included a recommended committee listing. The Trustees and audience had open dialog about denying the motion as is to amend the resolution to add UPI, Deans Council and the Administration in the committee listing.

Resolution No. 24.10/1

Action

Establishing Committee to Assess Presidential Appointment
(Legal Counsel, Victoria Smith)

Motion: Trustee Lang

Second: Trustee Cornell

Roll Call

Trustee Erika Lowe Mullins	No
Trustee Cody Cornell	No
Trustee Derek Wise	No
Trustee Polly Radosh	No
Trustee Doug Shaw	No
Trustee Kirk Dillard	No
Trustee Carin Stutz	No
Trustee Kisha Lang	No

Motion denied.

Motion to amend Resolution No. 24.10/1 – Add UPI, Deans Council and the Administration to the committee listing.

Motion: Trustee Wise

Second: Trustee Lang

Trustee Radosh – Move to amend the original resolution to include a recommended committee listing. The trustees will vote on an amended version of the resolution that recommended adding UPI, Deans Council and the Administration in the committee listing.

Roll Call

Trustee Cody Cornell	Yes
Trustee Derek Wise	Yes
Trustee Polly Radosh	Yes
Trustee Doug Shaw	Yes
Trustee Kirk Dillard	Yes
Trustee Carin Stutz	Yes
Trustee Kisha Lang	Yes
Trustee Erika Lowe Mullins	Yes

Motion approved.

Motion to approve amended Resolution No. 24.10/1
Establishing Committee to Assess Presidential Appointment
(Legal Counsel, Victoria Smith)

Action

Motion: Trustee Radosh
Second: Trustee Lang

Roll Call

Trustee Kisha Lang	Yes
Trustee Carin Stutz	Yes
Trustee Kirk Dillard	Yes
Trustee Doug Shaw	Yes
Trustee Polly Radosh	Yes
Trustee Derek Wise	Yes
Trustee Cody Cornell	Yes
Trustee Erika Lowe Mullins	Yes

Motion approved.

Resolution No. 24.10/2
Electing Trustee to Chair Presidential Appointment Assessment Committee
(Legal Counsel, Victoria Smith)

Action

Motion: Trustee Radosh
Second: Trustee Cornell

Discussion and vote for a Chair to the Presidential Appointment Assessment Committee.
Trustee Wise nominated
Trustee Wise accepted the nomination to Chair to the Presidential Appointment Assessment Committee

Roll Call

Trustee Polly Radosh	Yes
Trustee Doug Shaw	Yes
Trustee Kirk Dillard	Yes
Trustee Carin Stutz	Yes
Trustee Kisha Lang	Yes
Trustee Erika Lowe Mullins	Yes
Trustee Cody Cornell	Yes
Trustee Derek Wise	Yes

Motion approved.

Old Business

New Business

Change to the location for the March and June meetings for 2025. Due to the Distinguished University Professor event in Macomb

March 20, 2025 - Macomb

June 17, 2025 - QC

Next Meeting

BOT Retreat held today immediately following this meeting.

December 6, 2024 - Closed Session and Open Session - Macomb, Union Capitol Room

ADJOURN ACTION

Trustee moved to adjourn the meeting of the Board of Trustees at 3:02pm.

Motion: Trustee Wise

Second: Trustee Dillard

Roll Call

Trustee Carin Stutz	Yes
Trustee Kisha Lang	Yes
Trustee Erika Lowe Mullins	Yes
Trustee Cody Cornell	Yes
Trustee Derek Wise	Yes
Trustee Polly Radosh	Yes
Trustee Doug Shaw	Yes
Trustee Kirk Dillard	Yes

Motion approved.

Carin Stutz, Chair
Athena Brooks, Senior Executive Assistant to the President