

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES
IN PERSON AND VIA ZOOM TELECOMMUNICATIONS
CONFERENCE CALL
OCTOBER 19, 2023
4:02 PM**

AGENDA ITEM I – CALL TO ORDER:

Council members present were Members: Franklin, Ireland, Kinsey, Moskowitz, Silfa, Tomlinson, Ward

Absent but accounted for were Members: Chupka, Dozor, Fillippo, Schick

Chairperson Tomlinson called the meeting to order. Chairperson Tomlinson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**AGENDA ITEM II – APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
AS DISTRIBUTED TO THE COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES**

Chairperson Tomlinson calls for the approval of the September 7, 2023 minutes as distributed to the Council.

MOTION (SILFA/FRANKLIN)

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 7, 2023 MEETING AS
PRESENTED**

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

AGENDA ITEM III – PUBLIC COMMENT: LIMIT OF TEN (10) MINUTES:

Chairperson Tomlinson continues, “I’d like to mention at this time I’m also reported that Council did meet in conference after our September 7, 2023, meeting. No deliberations occurred during this workshop.

And now, public comment. Is there anyone here that would like to make public comment?”

APSCUF President comes to the table for their report, “My name is Margaret Ervin, and I’m the president of West Chester University’s ASPCUF chapter. It’s nice to be here. Nice to see you, nice to see folks online. So, I just wanted to echo, I think that what we’re hearing about things being off to a really great start this fall. It might be interesting for you to hear about the faculty perceptions of student engagement.

Anecdotally, many faculty are noticing more engagement from students compared to the first couple of years post-pandemic. Students are showing up to talk to librarians more, they’re showing up to meet with tutors and the learning assistance and resource center [LARC] and the writing center. And as the writing center director, I can speak to those numbers. We’re not back up to where we were before the pandemic, but we’re getting there; so that’s exciting!

Most importantly, they’re showing up to class! Professors were really worried that the downward trend we were seeing in class attendance was going to last for many years. There aren’t any conclusive studies that I know of to precisely explain student behavior post pandemic, but patterns definitely shifted. We could see this at WCU in the the student evaluations which have always been administered in person.

Last academic year, APSCUF looked at the student evaluations of professors which we requested at meet and discuss and we saw that response rates after COVID went down, meaning that fewer students were in class to fill out their ratings of instructors.

This was interestingly correlated with higher scores for professors, suggesting that if the student was not pleased with the course, for whatever reason they would stop showing up to a class rather than working through the discomfort. Anecdotally, this fall professors are noticing a shift in the first year class and its student behavior on the whole. So, it’ll be interesting to see what the

response rates are for the fall, which will be the last semester of collecting the student evaluation instruments on paper.

While we have concerns about the response rate for instructor ratings, the Union voted to move to online delivery of student evaluations because of the environmental impact of using so much paper to administer and report student ratings of their professors.

And so, another topic in terms of big initiatives underway that will involve a lot of faculty power and work; the Moon Shot for Equity invited Austin Community College, Chancellor Russell Lowry Hart to come, speak, and run a workshop for faculty, students, and staff, both in academic and student affairs. And I came away from the workshop inspired by the challenge, but also feeling very keenly the fact that WCU values the development and retention of its faculty and staff as a way to meet the goal of closing equity gaps and retention, that WCU invest in its people is a testament to the leadership of Chris Fiorentino, frankly. So, thank you, Chris; you're someone who truly cares for and values your people.

And Lowry Hart, on the other hand, suggested that the best tool he had at his disposal when closing equity gaps at Amarillo Community College was the power to let go of people who you felt, would get in the way of that progress. And that is simply not the way it's done here. It's not the way it can be done because of the strength of the Union to represent faculty and staff, and I want to credit Chris and Laurie with both being such strong partners with labor at West Chester. Because they invest in us, we are able to support students and contribute to West Chester's ongoing excellence. So, we look forward to the Moon Shot for Equity and the WCU way of doing it. That's all I have.”

Chairperson Tomlinson, “Thank you very much. Thank you, Dr. Ervin, we appreciate your comments.”

AGENDA ITEM IV – REPORT OF THE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON

Chairperson Tomlinson proceeds, “Very few from me. It was a very nice Homecoming, a great Homecoming, I really enjoyed it. I get the pleasure of running back and forth between the President's tent and Killinger Foundation, which is out behind the swimming pool up the hill. But it was nice. It's always nice seeing some of the alumni, not old alumni, young alumni, and me, the old alumni, but then of course there was a very nice gathering, and I think a great gathering

in the President's tent, and I was really impressed. Chris and I both commented that we had a great crowd. It was a great crowd for a football game. I think people really enjoyed that, and so homecoming was a great weekend.

And with that, that's all I have to present to you at this time.”

AGENDA ITEM V – REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Chairperson Tomlinson continues and calls on President Fiorentino for his report.

President Fiorentino proceeds with his report. “Thank you, Senator, And I was just informed that Representative Kenzie has joined the meeting also, so he is now also on.”

Chairperson Tomlinson, “Thank you.”

President Fiorentino continues with his report, “Well, thank you very much, and it’s just great to see everybody. We're about halfway through the semester believe it or not, and lots of incredible things are going on that I'm pleased to report on. I thank you, Dr. Ervin for your comments and your reflection on Moon Shot, which is certainly an important initiative for our campus community.

So many things have been going on. We had a really terrific Student Government Association Town Hall, where we took the leadership of the University and went down to the Sykes Theater and had lots of great questions from students. And those events are always wonderful; the input from the students really helps inform our decision making and keeps us on our toes. And we appreciate the amount of effort that went into that. It was a great evening I think, with a lot of productive discussion on issues that are important to students.

Another initiative, this is a new one that has resulted from some conversations between the borough, the county, and the university, and we've had several students hit by automobiles in the last year or so. And we got together and talked about that. Our police department, and the borough police department, and the county liaison to PENNDot and we are rolling out a pedestrian safety initiative. We have a watch on October 24, we're putting out some pamphlets and information for the students. And frankly, a lot of students walk around this campus with their heads down, on their phones, not particularly paying attention to whether cars are stopping for them. And in several cases this has resulted in things that could have been tragic. So far,

students haven't been significantly injured. But you know, ultimately if somebody is hit by a car and rolls up, and there's enough force for it to smash the windshield, which is what happened on the last one, that's a very frightening moment, so we're really trying to heighten student awareness around being careful walking around this campus.

And there are a number of other initiatives that are related to this in terms of some traffic planning along High Street and along Rosedale Avenue. Obviously, pedestrians and the automobiles have to coexist in the neighborhood of the campus, and we want to make sure they stay safe. So that's something that I'm very pleased to see happening.

In September, we had a visit from President Alex Aghajanian, President of the Tournament of Roses Parade. You're all aware that our marching band is marching in the parade on January 1, and he pays a visit to all of the organizations, all the bands that are performing. And so, we had a great event. The City of Philadelphia sent representatives out and presented him with the Liberty Bell, and we had a chance, we were all out on the practice field, the band practice field, and had a nice afternoon. The band played a little bit. He spoke and I spoke, and that was very nice. And we're getting more and more excited as the time comes near that we're gonna go out to Pasadena and fly the purple and gold and listen to our fabulous, Incomparable Golden Rams.

We also celebrated recently, the 50th anniversary of the Gordon Natural Area, which is something that has existed on this campus for 50 years, since 1973. It was really a visionary statement made by the campus back at that time, and it continues to be an important feature of the campus. If you've ever looked at an aerial photograph of our campus, we have massive woods that are back there, down below the football stadium and beyond, and the woods there, they are a significant contribution in many ways. It's an outdoor living and learning space for the campus; it's an environmental space; it's the existence of trees, is a natural cleansing process for the environment. And so we're very proud of the existence of that, and we enjoyed celebrating the 50th anniversary of it.

Related to that. We also had a visit from Chief Brad Kills Crow, who is the chief of the Delaware Tribe of the Lenape Nation. This amounted to a visit from a Head of State, the Lenape Nation is a recognized nation. And it was supposed to be an outdoor event, the weather did not cooperate, and we moved it inside to Sykes and kudos to everybody involved in that group, because what

would have been a great outdoor event turned into an incredible indoor event; very well attended, lots of good feeling, lots of community, and really just reflected our recognition of the original ancestors whose land this was. And we really feel that we've built a great rapport with this group. Tracey, to your credit, you've been very involved in this, and others, Brad, and others. So, we're very pleased about that. And we are committed to an ongoing relationship with the Delaware Tribe and the Lenape Nation. Great additional things to come. We actually have students from the Delaware tribe attending the University. We offer them in-state tuition, the tribe actually now is living out of Oklahoma. But again, this is their original home. So, we thought that would be an important, more than symbolic statement about this group. And those of us who were there, it was a very, very powerful experience.

Moving on, we had a very successful Career Fair. The career fairs on this campus, every time we have one, it outperforms the one before. The number of firms that are coming to this campus to meet with our students – we had to move from one venue to the Rec Center, and this last time we had to expand beyond the big room in the Rec Center to the other side, because there were so many firms that we couldn't fit them all into one room!

The students are coming in large numbers, not just graduating students who are panicking because it's time to get a job, but sophomores and juniors who are thinking about their futures are coming and meeting with firms. There are a lot of firms that are looking for student interns. So, the synergies associated with this. And kudos to Jen Rossi-Long and her team, because, this is becoming a real signature feature of this campus. And I visit every time, and I walk around and talk to the employers, and they're thrilled to be here to meet our students; they're anxious to hire our students. And so this is a very important part of the experience for our students because we're not just trying to get them graduated, we're trying to get them launched out into life and to have this much interest and opportunity for them to be looking at job prospects, is tremendous.

We also had our Latina/o/x Community Conference, the 10th anniversary of this event on campus, very well attended. Again, it's another event that combines the campus community and the greater community. I did attend, and we had dancing, and we had a visiting artist, and it's really just a great outreach event for the community. We have a significant Latina/o/x community in Chester County, and we now have this great 10-year tradition, that I'm sure is going to continue on and thrive.

I also wanna mention that we had an award-winning ecologist, Suzanne Simard, who came and spoke about her work in understanding how trees in a forest are actually connected and communicating underground. And it was really a fascinating speech, and fascinating research about how a forest is really a network of organisms that are communicating through their root systems. And it was very well attended, we just about filled Room 108 in SECC, and again, campus members, faculty staff, students, and many members of the community are coming. So that, you know, you see this theme of our engagement with the greater community here, which is certainly something very important to us.

We've got the official announcement of our 4th HEED Award. Again, Tracey, you've led that effort. A lot of people have contributed to that work, and congratulations. And I said this before, when you receive the HEED award, it's very prestigious. I think 109 schools received it this year. There are a lot of colleges and universities in this country, 4,000 or so; so, 109 is a pretty small percentage. And every time you achieve the standard, the next time you apply, they raise the bar. And so, we continue to perform just in an outstanding fashion in this regard. Again, HEED, which stands for the Higher Education, Excellence, and Diversity Award, which we're very proud to be sustaining on this campus.

I wanted to just say a few words myself about homecoming. As the Senator has already made some comments, we had reunions for the class of 63, the class of 68, and the class of 73. Sue and I had a chance to engage with these groups, some graduating from many years ago, 50, 55, 60 years ago, and they're dedicated to each other, they're dedicated to the campus, and it's really just wonderful to be able to spend some time with them. Many of them are generous donors to the University, they're proud of the many things that we're doing today, that reflect well on them as alumni and this university. So homecoming is always a fabulous sort of battery charging event for a president, and for anybody from the campus who participated. We had a great kick-off event, hosted by the Foundation under the big tent again, very well attended. Again, we're seeing many alumni on the campus, who in my many years in this job I have never met before. So, we're attracting new alumni which, of course, is a major goal in the Alumni Outreach and the Alumni Office, and the Alumni Association has been doing a wonderful job of achieving that.

We held the fourth DeBaptiste lecture, which is related to the Frederick Douglass Institute. Cliff DeBaptiste has endowed this lecture, and again, a very well attended event; members of the

campus community, members of the greater community. The speaker this time was Brenda Allen, President of Lincoln University, who gave an inspiring speech. And again, this has become another great tradition on our campus that that will sustain.

I'm pleased to report that we have hired a new Dean for the College of Mathematics and the Sciences, Jessica OShaughnessy, who has come to us from Stockton University, where she currently serves as the Associate Provost. She's a PhD. Mathematician with an impressive record of achievement and is a great fit. I had a wonderful conversation with her myself. She's excited to be here, and she brings the spirit of leadership that we believe is going to fit in beautifully with this campus. So, we're excited for her to be joining us.

And Jeff, I believe she's joining us in the spring?"

Dr. Osgood replies, "February 1st."

President Fiorentino continues, "Absolutely wonderful to be coming on board and the fact that we were able to move so quickly and get that finished. And Lisa, the interim Dean, did a fabulous job. Thank you, Lisa, for her work in keeping the college moving forward during that period.

I also want to report that the comprehensive campaign keeps moving along. We just closed another 1.5-million dollar gift, that moves us to 94% of our goal, and we're again, as I said at the last meeting, we're excited about the prospect of exceeding the goal even a year early, by the end of this academic year. And obviously this latest gift is a significant move in that direction. So 94%! And more things on the horizon that we're excited about.

The last thing I'll mention is, I'll continue to serve on the negotiating team for the APSCUF contract. It's taking up a lot of my time, I'm spending quite a bit of time in Harrisburg and I thank the leadership team for continuing to sustain the work of this university in my frequent absence.

So, with that I will report that the purchase orders and contracts for May 1st, 2023, through August 31st, 2023 are listed in in the materials for your review. If there are any questions or concerns, my Cabinet and I are available to discuss them with you. And if there are no further questions, Senator, that concludes my report."

Chairperson Tomlinson replies, “Thank you very much. Very good. Was that the Leni Lenape? Because William Penn built Pensbury Manor out on the other side of Trenton, right? So that he could trade with them. And we don't think about this, but he built it there because it was one rowboat, four guys rowing, from Market Street in Philadelphia to that location so that they could interact with the Indians for trade. It was amazing.”

President Fiorentino, “Well, and during the visit, that was mentioned as a focal point that has done a lot to support the traditions of the Lenape.”

Chairperson Tomlinson, “Great history. Thank you so much. Thank you for your report, Dr. Fiorentino.”

AGENDA ITEM VI – REPORT OF LIASON PERSON TO CONSTITUENCIES:

Chairperson Tomlinson calls for the report of Liaison Person to Constituencies.

Member Ward proceeds, “ Good evening everyone! With the Fall 2023 semester underway in-person this academic year, students are keeping busy with many various areas of student life. The Office of Student Leadership and Involvement hosted the Fall Involvement Fair on the Academic Quad on September 6th from 11 AM – 2 PM. The in-person fair was held outside on the academic quad which engaged 22 departments and 221 unique student organizations and an estimated 2,000 students attended the fair looking to get engaged. Additionally, the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement opened the Virtual Involvement Fair on RamConnect, which is designed to be on students’ own time and own pace. The fair digitally engaged 114 unique organizations with over 701 participants, 2660 booth visits, and 672 students clicked “I’m interested”. Keeping with the theme of the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement, the office is fully staffed with SLI director Cara Jenkins and Assistant Director Kimberly Farrer.

New this year was the combination of both Family Weekend and Homecoming. Events included reunions, the WCU Wicked Block Party hosted by Student Activities, comedian Jay Pharoah in Asplundh Concert Hall, and the Ram Fam Brunch. The football game occurred on Saturday, September 30th and WCU played against Bloomsburg University with a win of 24-21 and attendance of 7234. This year, the theme of the weekend was “There’s No Place Like WCU” in reference to the Wizard of Oz. Roll, and the division of Student Affairs, the Student Activity

Council, Athletics and the Alumni Association all came together to plan and make the week of September 29th - October 1st a memorable one.

On October 3rd the Student Government Association hosted a Student Town Hall in conjunction with the monthly Council of Organizations Meeting 7:15 PM located in Sykes Theater. This event was an opportunity for students to connect with the President's Cabinet in hope to foster conversation that is both meaningful in relationship building as well as solution-oriented. A variety of cabinet members engaged in dialogue with the campus community about topics that ranged from campus safety, to dining, to parking, and more. Attendees included both staff and students. 161 individuals checked into the event. Student questions and concerns were able to be submitted through Ram Connect, however, there was also a Q&A during the event in which Student Government Association President, Alex Clancy moderated. End of Report.

Lastly, Greek Day occurred on October 8th from 12 PM- 8 PM. Greek day has been brought back since the last one was in the Spring of 2018. 21 chapters participated making up a total of 10 teams. Events ranged from Volleyball, Dodgeball, and Trivia. Points were calculated based on team performance using brackets for volleyball and dodgeball and general points for trivia. IFC and PHC are donating \$250 to the winning IFC and PHC teams philanthropy in the chapter's name. This day was an opportunity for Greek Life to bond with some healthy competition as well. I personally was in attendance and it really was so much fun. It was great seeing all of Greek Life come together and support each other. Greek life at West Chester University makes up about 15% of the undergraduate student population, remaining above the all-campus GPA. In the Spring semester of 2023 chapters did over 2750 hours of community service and raised over \$65,000 for various philanthropies, hoping to surpass those numbers at the end of this fall semester. End of Report.”

President Fiorentino responds, “Thank you, Julie. Thank you for bringing up family day. I failed to mention that that took place the same time as homecoming, and as a matter of fact, it made the campus that much more full. I had a conversation with the police chief of the borough. We're always interested to learn how things went, and he said, the behavior was great, but the town was just so full. And we take that as a success. So I'm sorry for forgetting to mention that, Tabetha, but that was also a very successful event.”

AGENDA ITEM VII – REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT:

None.

AGENDA ITEM VIII – REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Chairperson Tomlinson continues with the meeting, “Reports on standing committees; members - would a member of each committee please report that the committee has met, provide a summary of your committee meeting, and present resolution(s) for consideration. First is finance and administration resolution. Chris Franklin.”

Member Franklin proceeds, “Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We had a really good and thorough meeting. The President was in attendance along with Jeff, Todd, and Ilene. The materials are always thoroughly prepared, as was this year. When I read the materials - and other the trustees may have had the same experience - I read about a 7.2% increase year over year in operating expenses. And when you, if added to education and general, the auxiliaries and restricted funds, it looked like more like an 8.8% year over year increase.

But Todd did a really nice job and follow up work, and when you really look at this 6% increase year over year, in basically labor, most of it out of the control of Chris and his team, so that, you know, if you take that out of it, maybe you take the one time aspects out of this budget, I'm thinking of things like facilities and some of those maintenance needs that are really one time, along with what I'll call capital items, and not capital in the universities think of it, but you take those transfers out of it, we're really talking about a budget that is increasing year over year, about 2 ½, little less than 2 ½ %. So it's a very, very, I think reasonable approach. And when you take all the factors in, a well prepared, well thought out, budget. And so given all the good work done, and the good conversation, matter of fact, Tommy, you were there with me, so you know the conversation was very thorough.

As a result of all that I will say. I'll read the Resolution and move it.”

MOTION (FRANKLIN/MOSKOWITZ)

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES OF WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY HEREBY APPROVES THE 2023-24 EDUCATIONAL AND GENERAL BUDGET FOR WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY AS IT IS PROPOSED

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Chairperson Tomlinson continues, “Thank you very much for your excellent work on that.”

Chairperson Tomlinson confirms that there are no reports or resolutions for Academic and Student Affairs, and also confirms the same for University Affairs; University Advancement & External Affairs; and Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion.”

AGENDA ITEM IX – REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE:

None

AGENDA ITEM X – OLD BUSINESS:

None.

AGENDA ITEM XI – NEW BUSINESS:

None.

AGENDA ITEM XII – ADJOURNMENT:

Chairperson Tomlinson comments, “Okay, this concludes our trustees meeting. Thank you for joining us, and I want to extend everyone's best wishes, and we'll see everyone back here again on our next regular scheduled meeting, which is November 15th.

Before I ask for a motion to adjourn, I want to announce that we will be holding a brief executive session after this meeting to discuss personal related matters. I now ask for a motion to adjourn.”

MOTION (FRANKLIN/SILFA)

MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 4:50 P.M.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marian Moskowitz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end of the last name.

Marian Moskowitz