

**MINUTES
OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS**

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

June 24, 2016

• **CALL TO ORDER**

Required statutory notice having been given, the special budget approval meeting of the Board of Regents of Western Kentucky University was held in the *Cornelius A. Martin Regents Room* at Mass Media and Technology Hall on the Western Kentucky University campus. The meeting was called to order by Chair, Mr. Frederick A. Higdon, at approximately 8:30 a.m., (CDT).

• **ROLL CALL**

The following Regents were present, representing a quorum of the Board:

Mr. Frederick A. Higdon, Chair	Mr. Gillard B. Johnson III
Dr. Melissa B. Dennison, Vice Chair	Mr. J. David Porter
Dr. Phillip W. Bale	Mr. Jay Todd Richey, Student Regent
Dr. Barbara G. Burch, Faculty Regent	Dr. Tamela W. Smith, Staff Regent
Ms. Cynthia Harris, Secretary	

Regents absent from the meeting:

Mr. John W. Ridley
Mr. Laurence J. Zielke

Others in attendance included the following:

Dr. Gary A. Ransdell, President
Dr. David D. Lee, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Mr. Gordon Johnson, Vice President and Chief Information Technology Officer
Mr. Brian Kuster, Vice President for Student Affairs
Ms. Ann Mead, Senior Vice President for Finance & Administration
Dr. Brian Meredith, Chief Enrollment and Graduation Officer
Mr. Bryan Russell, Chief Facilities Officer
Mr. Todd Stewart, Director of Athletics
Ms. Deborah T. Wilkins, General Counsel
Dr. Randy Capps, Parliamentarian
Ms. Julia J. McDonald, Assistant to the President for Board and Executive Relations

In keeping with the policy of the Board, the agenda for the meeting and information and materials pertinent to items thereon had been mailed in advance of the meeting to members of the Board.

Page numbers reflect where the detailed action items are located in the meeting agenda book and can be accessed online https://www.wku.edu/regents/meeting_archives.php.

Regent Johnson stated that the Finance and Budget Committee held a special-called meeting on Monday, June 20, 2016, for the purpose of discussing and reviewing a budget presentation from Ms. Ann Mead. After thorough review and discussion, the Finance and Budget Committee voted to submit the 2016-17 Operating Budget and Tuition and Mandatory Fees Schedule to the full Board for approval.

FINANCE AND BUDGET COMMITTEE – ACTION ITEM

FB-1 Approval of the 2016-17 Operating Budget and Tuition and Mandatory Fees Schedule
[pp 1-8 and separate attachment]

MOTION

Motion to approve the 2016-17 Operating Budget and Tuition and Mandatory Fees Schedule was made by Regent Barbara Burch and seconded by Vice Chair Melissa Dennison.

DISCUSSION

Regent Richey:

I have come with prepared remarks to ensure they are added to the minutes verbatim and to express my concern for both the operating budget and the proposed tuition increase.

I have concerns about three areas: first, the dramatic cut to WKU Track and Field; second, the effective elimination of the WKU Institute for Citizenship and Social Responsibility (ICSR); and third, the tuition increase coupled with the burden of the budget cuts not being shared across the WKU community and rising cost of college.

Before I address each of these, I want to make it very clear that I, as a constituency regent, believe the Board's role is not just advisory or laissez-faire. If the Board believes the wrong decision has been made on any level, I believe the Board has the power to speak up and oversee the implementation and the outcomes of decisions. There must be an oversight on accountability, and the Board always has the choice to step up to the plate if it so chooses.

First, the dramatic cut to Track and Field eliminating half of their budget is deeply unsettling. Our University is clearly sending a resounding message that if you do not generate revenue for the University, you are not a priority. As one of the most academically successful and competitive athletic teams at our University, every student involved with Track and Field deserves a Student Regent on this Board that will stand up for them. Regardless of how a \$261,008 reduction affects these student athletes, this will certainly have a negative impact on a very successful athletic team that is truly valuable to the Hilltopper community. In conclusion, I will always suggest a solution once I have identified a problem. As such, my solution would be instituting a 3% across-the-

board cut in the total athletic budget. When facing tough cuts, each WKU athletic team should bear the burden equally, and no student athlete should be deprived the opportunity to compete at the D-1 level. Because that was not the decision, I cannot in good conscience support this aspect of the budget.

Second, I am extremely disappointed with the effective elimination of the Institute for Citizenship and Social Responsibility (ICSR). While we are calling this a consolidation, there's an implication that both sides consented to such an action. I have been informed multiple times that Dr. Judy Rohrer, former Director of the ICSR, was not consulted before the decision was made, and I am not comfortable approving a budget that condones that. Moreover, I believe we are using budget cuts to justify a political move designed to suppress the purpose of the ICSR: encouragement of independent thinking and instilling within students a passion for fighting for social justice causes. Reductions to a cutting-edge academic program by redistribution of its operating budget is not a prudent solution. I'd also like to make it clear that I believe the ALIVE Center does great work, but it must be understood that both the ICSR and the ALIVE Center have fundamentally different purposes. The former is an academic bastion of progress; the latter is a hands-on, community connector. As such, "consolidating" the two is a euphemism for diluting both causes, especially the ICSR's. We have to look at what is best for all parties, and this is certainly not what is best for the ICSR. My solution is non-erasure: we should not erase programs that have grown leaps and bounds over the past few years and, instead, identify other alternatives that would reduce specific budgets equally and not result in the merging or dissolution of one academic program. (This is a university. Our academic mission is primary.)

Third, I want it to be clear that—as much as I dislike the circumstances—I am not inherently opposed to a tuition increase, although I firmly believe the cost of college in 2016 is outrageous. However, I cannot in good conscience vote in favor of a tuition increase unless the burden is shared across the WKU community. As such, I do not see a commitment of sharing the burden of these budget cuts on the administrative level. And let me be clear, compared to other universities our size, our administrative salaries are not out of line, and this is certainly not an attack on any one person. The problem is that there is a clear perception that while we cut student programming, student resources, and full-time, vacant faculty and staff positions, senior-level administrative positions and up appear to have sailed this budget storm smoothly. If student tuition is going to rise, vacant faculty positions are being cut, and many staff members are seeing their jobs privatized, I expect for something to also be forfeited by those who enjoy the most privileged positions at our University. I do not believe that is too radical or too much to ask. Again, this is neither a personal attack against anyone nor a method by which I wish to dodge ensuring our faculty and staff receive a much-needed salary increase, but it is my responsibility to be the defender for the WKU student body during times such as this.

These are my reasons for withholding support for both the proposed 2016-17 operating budget and tuition increase. In good conscience and after much research, I will cast my vote with integrity. I'm open to any questions from members of the Board.

Regent Johnson:

As Chair of the Finance and Budget Committee, I think it's unrealistic to look at the budget process as we do across-the-board cuts, that's just not how budgets operate in any institution (profit or non-profit). While Track and Field took the largest hit in the athletics budget, there were indeed other cuts in athletics budget. You have to look at all aspects of the institution that are productive, those that enhance and move forward the mission. You cannot cut across the board just in the name of equality because it does not exist. The budget is a process that rests exclusively with the administration. Regents have the obligation and responsibility to establish policy.

Regent Smith:

I appreciate the work that Ms. Mead and her staff have done to put such a difficult budget together with so many variables in place. I support the budget, we've had long discussions on it and not everyone is going to like everything. There were five employees who have been relocated due to budget cuts and 200+ staff in facilities who were privatized. I just want to acknowledge that they are a huge part of our University whose lives have been changed significantly and it's tough—but had we not privatized those positions, jobs would have been lost.

VOTE / ACTION TAKEN

Approved / 8 – 1 **Not Approved** **Other** _____

Regent Jay Todd Richey voted NO.

OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Higdon requested Regents to make note of the calendar dates listed below:

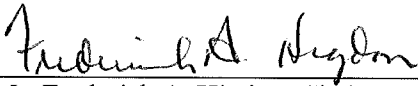
- July 21 ~ Retreat
 - July 22 ~ Third Quarterly Board Meeting
 - August 19 ~ Opening Convocation
 - September 23 ~ Committee Meetings
 - October 22 ~ HOMECOMING
 - October 28 ~ Fourth Quarterly Board Meeting
 - December 9 ~ Committee Meetings
 - December 10 ~ Commencement
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ADJOURNMENT

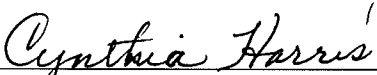
With no further business, Chair Higdon adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:00 a.m. (CDT).

CERTIFICATION OF SECRETARY

I hereby certify that the minutes herein above set forth an accurate record of votes and actions taken by the Board of Regents of Western Kentucky University in the special budget approval meeting held June 24, 2016, in the *Cornelius A. Martin Regents Room* at Mass Media and Technology Hall on the Western Kentucky University campus, and further certify that the meeting was held in compliance with KRS 61.810, 61.815, 61.820, and 61.825 (enacted as Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 of House Bill 100, 1974 Regular Session, General Assembly).



Mr. Frederick A. Higdon, Chair
WKU Board of Regents
Approved on October 28, 2016



Ms. Cynthia Harris, Secretary
WKU Board of Regents
Approved on October 28, 2016