

THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

MINUTES OF THE TRUSTEES

“Special Meeting”

Wednesday, December 16, 2020

**Final minutes can be found on the University of Wyoming Board of Trustees website at
www.uwyo.edu/trustees**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Wednesday, December 16, 2020
Via Video Conference
No Physical Location Due to COVID – 19
Laramie, Wyoming**

The University of Wyoming Board of Trustees held a “Special Meeting” conference call on Wednesday morning, December 16, 2020. Trustee Chairman Jeff Marsh called the meeting to order at 8:29 a.m. Deputy Secretary RoseMarie London took roll.

Trustees participating: Mel Baldwin, Brad Bonner, Kermit Brown, David Fall, Jeff Marsh, John McKinley, Macey Moore, Dick Scarlett, Laura Schmid-Pizzato, Michelle Sullivan, and Dave True. Ex-officio Trustees: UW President Ed Seidel, ASUW President Riley Talamantes, and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jillian Balow were in attendance. Wyoming Community College Executive Director Sandy Caldwell and Governor Mark Gordon were not in attendance. Senior Policy Advisor Lachelle Brant attended on Governor Gordon’s behalf.

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Public Session

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AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Proposed 2021 Spring Campus Plan, Seidel

MINUTES OF THE MEETING:

University of Wyoming President Ed Seidel provided the Board a review of the information contained in the proposed 2021 Spring Campus Plan outlining key points with particular focus on student wellness and health. President Seidel discussed changes to the governance structure as it relates to managing the COVID-19 response. President Seidel discussed the variety of input received on the proposed plan. President Seidel stated the science based plan and educational priorities at the university are often at odds, and the plan addresses a best judgement response.

Trustee Michelle Sullivan inquired about the academic calendar. President Seidel provided information about the “limited contact period” recommended prior to the beginning of the Spring semester. Interim Provost Anne Alexander discussed working toward learning management and training opportunities for students and the offering of asynchronous classes.

Trustee David Fall discussed his conversation with students in Gillette, and inquired about communication to students about information on the delivery of their courses. President Seidel reported the robust discussion regarding providing students’ clarity and the decision points on the delivery of classes. Interim Provost Alexander discussed various tags within the registration system.

Trustee Fall further inquired about restrictions on travel and its negative effects on research and the impact on degree completion, further stating the decision about travel should not be absolute. In response, Vice President for Research and Economic Development Ed Synakowski provided the impact on the research enterprise during the fall semester. Vice President Synakowski stated the opinion that the guidelines are pragmatic though acknowledged the impact on student’s research activities.

In response to inquiry from Trustee Sullivan, President Seidel provided information about special accommodations made when degree programs included in person requirements. Alexander stated that in-person activities are being allowed so students may complete their degree programs. She went on to explain that the University of Wyoming asks students completing in-person activities to comply with whatever procedures the host institution requires for COVID-19.

Trustee Jeff Marsh remarked on receiving overwhelming constituent opposition to online course delivery.

Trustee Dick Scarlett inquired about the need to revert to all online course delivery in April. In response, President Seidel described the reasoning behind going fully online during the fall semester after Thanksgiving, and stated there is similar reasoning behind the proposal to go fully online after spring break. Trustee Scarlett followed up by asking if there was flexibility on the date to transition fully online in April. In response to Trustee Scarlett, Alexander explained the exception request process for students and faculty who need to be on campus and complete in-person activities during the final months of the spring semester.

Vice Provost Tami Benham-Deal discussed the adjustments noted in the second paragraph on page 6 of the plan which allow for seniors and graduate students to complete in-person activities as required by their degrees.

Trustee Schmid-Pizzato stated her support of the phased approach but expressed a prediction of the situation in April or May was premature in the face of the availability of a vaccine. Trustee Macey Moore concurred. Trustee Moore requested a continued exploration of opportunity for in-person student engagement; particularly at the freshman level. President Seidel stated the opportunity for flexibility in the spring plan, and the reasons for the determinations made about the schedule in the spring. Trustee Marsh discussed the possibility to continue student engagement in lieu of a spring break. Trustee John McKinley reminded the Board the proposed plan is dynamic and contains administration's best processes based on known facts. Trustee McKinley further stated continued support for the president's decision making ability.

ASUW President Riley Talamantes provided the student perspective regarding the desire for certainty, and how rapid changes based on new information can cause unnecessary anxiety and stress resulting in frustration with the University.

Trustee Kermit Brown stated his support for the shortened spring break and moving fully online after spring break ends. He explained that this choice would provide students the most reliable way to predict the date for going fully online during the semester.

State Superintendent for Public Instruction Jillian Balow stated her support of Trustees Moore and Schmid-Pizzato's statements against a more restrictive plan, and discussed the ultimate goal of in-person engagement.

Faculty Senate Chairman Rudi Michalak concurred with remarks made by Talamantes on behalf of students regarding the stress of ambiguity.

Trustee Dave True stated his top priority is the safety of students, faculty, staff and the community. Trustee True stated he supported any assumptions the plan makes to allow for a safe semester. In response, President Seidel stated the plan responded to best predictions based on data available. President Seidel discussed the response to requests to provide clarity, and stated agreement with Trustee True regarding the importance of safety.

Staff Senate President Chris Stratton stated safety is the first priority.

Trustee Scarlett discussed the communication the trustees have received from concerned parents and requested to see the university responses. President Seidel and Trustee Marsh reported the ways in which responses to each constituent are delivered, and gave assurances about the attention given to concerns.

***Proposed 2021 Spring Campus Plan
Approved 12-16-2020 @ 9:23 a.m.***

Trustee Kermit Brown moved to adopt the proposed 2021 Spring Campus plan as presented. Trustee McKinley seconded the motion. Trustee Laura Schmid-Pizzato moved to amend the motion revising the delivery of courses in April from online to in person. Trustee Macey Moore seconded the amendment. The amendment was lost and Trustee Jeff Marsh called for the question. Deputy Secretary RoseMarie London conducted a roll call vote on the motion. Trustees Jeff Marsh, Macey Moore, Laura Schmid-Pizzato and Michelle Sullivan voted No. Trustees Brad LaCroix and David Fall were not present for the vote. The motion carried.

Trustee Dave True expressed appreciation for additional information on the University of Wyoming at Casper College component of the plan.

President Seidel noted that CARES Act funding had been authorized to be used to refund certain fall semester student fees. Deputy Vice President for Finance David Jewell further detailed that this refund will cover athletics fees, music and theater fees, and the recycling fee. The total amount to be refunded is \$141.17 per full time student enrolled at the Laramie campus during the fall 2020 semester.

Date of Next Meeting

January 13-15, 2021 (Video Conference)

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:28 a.m.

Executive Session

“Special Meeting” Wednesday, December 16, 2020

7:00 a.m.

Via Video Conference

The University of Wyoming Board of Trustees called the meeting to order at 7:00 a.m. Trustee Michelle Sullivan moved the Board enter into Executive Session for the purpose of:

- 1) Matters concerning litigation to which the governing body is a party or proposed litigation to which the governing body may be a party under Wyoming Statute 16-4-405(a)(iii); and
- 2) Consideration of the acceptance of gifts, donations and bequests which the donor has requested in writing to be kept confidential under Wyoming Statute 16-4-405(a)(viii).

The Executive Session was attended by the 12 voting members of the UW Board of Trustees, ex-officio members, and UW administrators and staff as appropriate. Trustee Dave True seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous decision. The Board entered into Executive Session at 7:02 a.m.

Trustees participating: Mel Baldwin, Brad Bonner, Kermit Brown, David Fall, Brad LaCroix, Jeff Marsh, John McKinley, Macey Moore, Dick Scarlett, Laura Schmid-Pizzato, Michelle Sullivan, and Dave True. Ex-officio Trustees Governor Mark Gordon, UW President Ed Seidel, ASUW President Riley Talamantes, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jillian Balow, and Director of Wyoming Community College Commission Sandy Caldwell were in attendance.

Vice President and General Counsel Tara Evans, Deputy General Counsel Paula Whaley, UW Board of Trustees Deputy Secretary RoseMarie London, and IT Specialist Lisa Stafford attended the entirety of the meeting. The following administrators and external individuals attended during their respective agenda items: Senior Policy Advisor Lachelle Brant, Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration Neil Theobald, Senior Vice President for Development John Stark, and Outside Counsel Rob Jarosh.

Respectfully submitted,



RoseMarie London
Deputy Secretary, UW Board of Trustees