

**Minutes of a Regularly Scheduled Meeting  
Eastern Kentucky University  
Board of Regents**

**September 23, 2021  
10 a.m.**

**Powell 219  
Eastern Kentucky University**

**Call to Order**

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Eastern Kentucky University Board of Regents convened on September 23, 2021, at 10:37 a.m. at the Powell building Room 219, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky. The meeting was delayed due to the dedication of the Berman Center for Professional Sales in The College of Business. Chair Diaz addressed the board members regarding an open litigation and a report is provided to them by Counsel. Due to the absence of Ms. Fohl, this will not be discussed in closed session today. The Chair urged the members to reach out to University Counsel with any questions. The Chair confirmed visually that a quorum was established. For the record, Chair Diaz indicated that Regent Vasudevan and Regent Babbage are joining the meeting via video teleconference.

**Present**

Mr. Lewis Diaz  
Mr. Juan Castro  
Mr. Jeremiah Duerson  
Ms. Jenna Smith  
Mr. Alan Long  
Dr. Jason Marion  
Ms. Lynn Taylor Tye  
Mr. Mike Eaves  
Mr. Ashley Ward  
Dr. David T. McFaddin, President

**Via Video Teleconference**

Mr. Vasu Vasudevan  
Ms. Laura Babbage  
Mr. Matt Roan, Vice President and Director of Athletics

**Absent**

None

## **Others Present**

Dr. Tanlee Wasson, Senior Vice President for Student Success and Enrollment Management  
Dr. Dannie Moore, Vice President Strategic Initiatives and Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer  
Mr. Barry Poynter, Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration  
Dr. Richard Crosby, Chair, Faculty Senate  
Dr. Caelin Scott, Chair, Staff Council  
Mr. Rick Erdmann, Head Coach Emeritus  
Members of the faculty, staff, and media

## **Information Items**

### **A. University Reports**

Chair Diaz indicated that the agenda would be presented out of order due to some special guests the board would like to acknowledge. Chair Diaz addressed the last action item on the agenda, with the approval of a resolution, and turned the floor over to Athletics Director, Matt Roan who joined via video teleconference. Mr. Roan read the resolution to rename the Olympic Sports Training Center as the “Rick Erdmann Olympic Sports Training Center.” A motion to approve the resolution to rename the Olympic Sports Training Center was made by Regent Long. The motion was seconded by Regent Tye. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

The Chair acknowledged Head Coach Emeritus Rick Erdmann and thanked him for his service to the student athletes, the name brand of the institution, and the world of cross-country and track and field. The Chair asked Mr. Roan if he would proceed with his presentation.

#### **1. Mr. Matt Roan, Department of Athletics Update**

Mr. Matt Roan, Vice President and Director of Athletics, gave an Athletics and Campus Recreation update, a copy of which is incorporated herein and will be included with the official copy of the minutes.

#### **2. Dr. Dannie Moore, and Dr. Tanlee Wasson, Student Life / E3 Update | Student Success & Enrollment Update**

Dr. Tanlee Wasson, Senior Vice President for Student Success, Engagement, and Opportunity, gave an enrollment and recruitment update, which included an increase in the percentage rates of first-time students, transfers from other institutions, and underrepresented minority populations. Dr. Wasson expressed the excitement of holding orientation at Alumni Coliseum this year for the first time, the success of the BookSmart program, and a new tradition called Big E Beginnings. The update is incorporated herein and will be included with the official copy of the minutes.

Dr. Dannie Moore shared a presentation, including videos with music, showing the E3 experience, the success of the Big E Welcome, and upcoming Anchor Events through April 2022, a copy of which is incorporated herein and will be included with the official copy of the minutes.

Chair Diaz reminded the board that last fiscal year they approved the Student Experience fee, with the support of Student Government, which has been the catalyst for this level of events and plays a part in driving enrollment and a transformative student experience.

## **2. Dr. David T. McFaddin, Strategic Planning Update**

Dr. David T. McFaddin, President, gave a presentation on the ECU Strategic Plan 2022-2030, where the university has been, where it is now, and where it is going. This update focused on the university's vision, mission, strategic priorities, and guiding values, a copy of which is incorporated herein and will be included with the official copy of the minutes.

## **4. Mr. Barry Poynter, Financial Update**

Mr. Barry Poynter, Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration, presented a preliminary summary of the budget through June 30, 2021, a copy of which is incorporated herein and will be included with the official copy of the minutes.

[The Chair adjourned for a 5-minute recess at 12:00 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 12:07 p.m.]

## **B. Additional Reports to the Board**

### **1. Written Reports**

#### **a. Dr. Richard Crosby, Faculty Senate Chair**

Dr. Richard Crosby, Chair of Faculty Senate, presented an in-person report to the Board, a copy of which is incorporated herein and will be included with the official copy of the minutes.

#### **b. Dr. Caelin Scott, Staff Council Chair**

Dr. Caelin Scott, Chair of Staff Council, submitted an in-person report to the Board, a copy of which is incorporated herein and will be included with the official copy of the minutes. Chair Diaz thanked Dr. Scott for her leadership of the staff council commenting on behalf of the Board, the role that the staff play is incredibly important to creating a positive experience. He acknowledged that the faculty take care of the educational standpoint for the students to come here to achieve their degree, but the time that they spend on campus outside of the classroom far exceeds the time that they spend inside the classroom, so the staff play a very essential role in providing our best foot forward in creating positive, transformational experiences for our students.

### **c. Ms. Jenna Grace Smith, Student Government Association Chair**

Ms. Jenna Grace Smith, Chair of Student Government Association, submitted a written report to the Board, a copy of which is incorporated herein and will be included with the official copy of the minutes.

### **2. Dr. David T. McFaddin, President**

President David McFaddin delivered the following report:

This academic year is already off to an incredible start, and we could not have accomplished what we have thus far this semester without our employees and their commitment to our students to provide the best experience possible. We implemented a strategic plan for a full return to on-campus classes, programming, and support services. Our students are already forming potentially lifelong connections, opening their minds to diverse thinking and experiences, and soaking in knowledge in the fields that will shape their future careers.

These transformative moments are the building blocks that will become the foundation of their adult lives. There has been no greater feeling than seeing the return of some of our traditions like the Big E Welcome Walk and class photo embraced by our newest class of Colonels. This incoming cohort of students has had so much taken from them by a global pandemic. They are already accomplished at overcoming adversity and their determination should inspire us all to fulfill our mission to educate and inspire students to make the most of every opportunity before them.

#### **Enrollment Trends**

After a period of uncertainty in an unusual recruiting environment, I am very proud to report that enrollment numbers are showing some very promising trends. Some of the highlights for this academic year include:

- 2,531 New First-Time Freshmen
- Nearly 10% increase in new class year over year (first time in six years)
- 12% increase of in-state enrollment
- Nearly 20% increase in-service region enrollment
- 68% of students living on campus
- Up or steady in all underrepresented populations
- Up in new-transfer students

We must remain focused on recruitment, retention, and graduation efforts. We still have some ground to gain in overall enrollment, but the current numbers reflect growth in the key areas

of focus. The experience our students have at EKU can be the best endorsement we have in encouraging others to make EKU a college of choice.

### **Exceptional Eastern Experience**

We have been intentional with our planning and rollout of the Exceptional Eastern Experience (E3), which will give our students so many additional opportunities to participate in events that will provide them with a lifetime of memories from their college experience. The Big E Welcome was a smashing success, and we had a week of events for students to get to know the campus and their classmates. We have a number of concerts, comedians, athletic events, and lively activities right here on campus. J.D. Shelburne will be live in the Ravine this weekend, and we just announced T Pain in concert in November. It's an exciting time to be a student at EKU. We have several national touring acts this year, and we are integrating events for students into our athletic experiences.

We have also returned to in-person programming at the EKU Center for the Arts, Central Kentucky's premier live entertainment and arts destination. After a year of limited interactions, you will find a number of these events and experiences open to our campus and local communities including live music, pep rallies, festivals and much more.

### **EKU BookSmart**

The EKU BookSmart program has created a unique and distinguishable buzz about our commitment to college affordability and removing financial barriers. Investing in textbooks and required course materials positions our students for success by ensuring students are prepared and ready to learn from the first day of class. More than 10,000 Big E Boxes have been supplied to students this fall and students and parents have expressed their gratitude for removing that expense from the overall cost of attendance.

### **Graduates Enter a Challenging Workforce**

While our incoming class faced trepidation in how they would navigate a post-pandemic college experience, our graduates entered an evolving workforce and they too persevered to achieve their career goals. We take pride that EKU graduates have earned the #1 ranking in Kentucky employment rates among bachelor's degree holders. Seventy-six percent of EKU graduates find full-time jobs within six months of graduating, and that is a true testament to how well our faculty and our unique EKU experiences are equipping graduates for their future careers.

In classrooms, labs, and real-world learning environments, our students receive world-class instruction as we work every day to provide educational excellence at EKU. A special congratulations to Faculty Regent Dr. Jason Marion for earning the 2021 [Global Health and Innovation Conference \(GHIC\) Innovation Prize](#) for his water purification research. We will continually look to provide innovative teaching and learning methods for the betterment of our faculty and students. And I want to say thank you to this board for your commitment to innovation and opportunity by continuing to invest resources in these types of opportunities through the Board of Regents Innovation Fund.

## Corporate Partners Program

As part of the ECU Advantage, Eastern Kentucky University has partnered with multiple nonprofit and corporate entities to provide educational opportunities to employees at significant discounts. As the School of Opportunity, we strongly believe in the power of education in improving the lives of the employees and the entities they work for. We have recently finalized agreements with the Kentucky League of Cities, the Kentucky Association of Counties, Google, Hyster-Yale, Fayette County Public Schools, and many others, with more on the way.

Corporate and nonprofit partnerships are just another way that ECU is Kentucky's University, providing educational opportunities for anyone who wants to improve their lives through education. Specifically, it positions ECU to be the first-choice partner for adult learners who work for some of our most signature and important industries and companies.

## Health and Wellbeing on Campus

This semester we remain vigilant of public health measures and are closely monitoring both our university and local rates for COVID-19 vaccinations and infections. Our COVID-19 campus dashboard is active at <https://staywell.eku.edu/dashboard>. Currently, Madison County is in an upsurge of COVID-19 cases, and we are keeping a close watch on not only COVID cases, but the ability of our local medical facilities to treat patients for routine medical issues.

ECU student and employee populations have seen only moderate case totals of illness in comparison with increased cases in our local area. Contact tracing remains a key component in recognizing and addressing any potential vulnerabilities among our campus community. Please continue encouraging students and colleagues to report cases of illness or exposure, be mindful of any potential symptoms, and quarantine or isolate as needed and advised by health officials.

## COVID-19 Vaccinations

Vaccination remains the strongest tool to reduce transmission and lessen the risk of severe illness. If you are already fully vaccinated, thank you. Be sure to log in to ECU Direct and report your vaccination status. If you are able but not currently vaccinated, ECU is strongly encouraging students and employees to receive a vaccination as soon as possible. Increasing the overall vaccination rate of our students, faculty, and staff will position us to have the greatest chance of finishing this semester and year without any interruption to in-person learning, residential living, and campus programming and events.

## Leadership Searches

College of Letters Arts and Social Sciences Dean search:

- Co-chairs- **Ida Kumoji-Ankrah**, Executive Director of the Institute for Creative and Collaborative Arts; **Julie George**, Dean of Libraries
- Timeline- Best consideration date of October 1; Finalist interviews in November
- Adjustments to search process:
  - Expanded advertising and recruitment program
  - Additions to committee

- Revised leadership profile

#### College of Business Dean search:

- Co-chairs- **Beth Polin**, Associate Professor of Business; **Dannie Moore**, Vice President for Student Life and Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer
- Timeline- Best consideration date of October 29; Finalist interviews in late January
- Adjustments to search process
  - Expansion of committee to include significant membership from community and other colleges
  - Expanded advertising and recruitment program
  - Revised leadership profile

#### College of Justice, Safety and Military Science Dean search:

- Co-chairs- **Lynnette Noblitt**, Chair, Department of Government; **John Williamson**, Superintendent of Model and Dean of K-12
- Timeline- Best consideration date of August 27; Finalist interviews in November

#### College of Health Sciences Dean search:

- Co-chairs- **Abbey Poffenberger**, Chair of Language and Cultural Studies, Anthropology, and Sociology; **Shirley O'Brien**, Professor of Occupational Therapy, Foundation Professor
- Timeline and search committee to be finalized in October

### **Strategic Planning**

As I highlighted earlier in the meeting our strategic planning process is well underway and there is a lot of excitement and energy around our focus on experiencing excellence. The simplicity, yet power that is reflected in our goal areas of Knowledge, Innovation and Transformation will unify our campus and galvanize our commitment to our communities, our partners, and our alumni that ECU's best days are ahead.

This semester is off to a successful start, and I am excited to see excellence in action for the upcoming academic year. Thank you for all you do and for your commitment to ECU as a School of Opportunity.

### **3. Mr. Lewis Diaz, Chair of the Board**

Chair Lewis Diaz delivered the following report:

Thank you, Mr. President. Whenever I must follow your report, I feel like there's not much to say, other than thank you, and keep up the good work. I'll resist the temptation to do that.

I want to thank the ECU team, from our staff to our faculty, even students -- we do have student employees -- and students like Jenna, who are involved in service -- they've been outstanding. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and coming out of it, we've focused on creating a place where we can provide both an in-person learning experience balanced with a superior student life experience. I think ECU is winning in this. I think we're doing it better than others, and hopefully today's presentation evidenced that for everyone that's here to see it.

We've welcomed a very large new Freshman class, and I didn't put Dr. Wasson on the spot in asking what it's going to look like next year --how are we going to grow. I resisted the temptation to do that, Dr. Wasson, but we are paying very close attention. The most encouraging thing for me in that space is the cross-departmental collaboration. When you sit in these seats as Board members, we sometimes look for gaps, look for opportunities. Everyone here is a doer in some capacity, and we all want to serve in some way. What I find is that there are fewer, and fewer gaps to raise our hands about, and I'm lucky, we're lucky as an institution.

We have a vice-chair that works closely with auditing to make sure that is done right, to make sure we have a careful eye on what's happening in the institution on the back end. That's something that I don't worry about.

In Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, I'm lucky that Regent Castro works closely with Dr. Moore to make sure that we're providing the right opportunities for students. We're not all born into equal circumstances, we don't all have equal abilities, but we certainly can work very hard to make sure that we have equal opportunities. That's something that I know Regent Castro is passionate about, I am too, but knowing that he can carry the load in that space allows me to take a step back and look at other things.

I'm lucky to have Regent Eaves on the board. He's been helpful already in some matters that you may have read about in the newspaper regarding litigation with a former conference. And so, there are people on the board that are helpful and that are engaged. We have Regent Ward who is newer on the Board, and already he is engaged in working with Regent Marion on the Presidential Evaluation that you all will hear more about in our Fall meeting. Regent Tye works closely with our Vice President of Finance to make sure we are asking the right questions and that the presentation and financial report captures everything that it needs to capture and is as transparent as it can be, with respect to the auxiliaries that we put forth as a university.

Jenna, you are a continuation of a trend that I have seen over the past few years where the partnership between the Student Government Association and the Office of the President continues to grow. I saw that with Madison Lipscomb, I saw it with Eyuoel, and certainly see it with you. So, thank you for that, and thank you for the way that you're connecting with the President, with that office, and just driving positivity for students and for the experience. Thank you.

Regent Duerson, I know that you're newer. I don't know yet where it is that you're going to drive the engagement, but I know it's coming. We've enjoyed very, very good leadership from



the Staff Regent, so I'm looking forward to what it is that you're going to accomplish and what gaps you're going to fill during your term.

As I sit here, I feel fortunate that we have such a strong team of Board members, all of whom have their own passion, and all of whom are helpful to the institution in their own way. As I move forward in the next year, I'll continue to pay attention to the strategic plan, and I think all the talking points that you heard today are on point. We do want to create exceptional experiences both in the classroom and outside of the classroom. We want to be bold, and we want to distinguish ourselves as a university. We want to define who our peers are, and then we want to distinguish ourselves from our peers so that we're unique in the way that we approach our customers, which I view as the student.

The Exceptional Eastern Experience is a big part of what we're doing. Obviously, it's something that the students support. They're willing to put their fee dollars into that, so we want to be good stewards of that. I think that's an opportunity for us to create that unique experience, and I commend the President and the team for the work that they're doing in that space.

Then there are strategic investment opportunities, relationships, corporate partnerships, investment in faculty and staff innovation, things that we can do as an institution where we can simply win against our competitors because we can be innovative, and we can be efficient in the way that we address that. I think we have a pretty good structure to do that, where Dr. Martin is working on a regular basis with faculty and staff to bring ideas before the Board that we can review, evaluate, and fund at the first quarter of every year. Those are things that have provided fruit for our university and they're things that I'll continue to pay attention to but for now. Let me say thank you to the Board for allowing me to serve in this capacity and thank you to the President for the work that you're doing in ensuring that none of us get phone calls.

### **Action Items**

Chair Diaz presented to the full Board the following items on the Consent Agenda for approval:

#### **A. Approval of the Minutes for the Full Board Meeting on June 17, 2021 and the Special Meeting of July 26, 2021**

A motion was made by Regent Tye to approve the minutes for the June 17, 2021 and the July 26, 2021 Board Meetings. The motion was seconded by Regent Eaves. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

#### **B. Personnel Actions**

President McFaddin asked the Board to refer to page 57 in the Board book, where they will see the personnel items available that have happened since the last time the Board met. The President refers to the Board for those items to be approved. A motion was made by Regent Tye to approve the Personnel Actions Report. The motion was seconded by Regent Castro. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

### **C. Approval of Policy Updates for Model Laboratory School**

President McFaddin indicated that what was reflected in this policy was simply the update for the annual Kentucky School Board Association that comes before the legislature every year, so these rules have gone into effect, and this simply reflects our compliance with those rules. The President refers to the Board to approve as presented. A motion was made by Regent Tye to approve the policy for Model Laboratory School. The motion was seconded by Regent Castro. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Chair Diaz took a moment before making a motion for closed session, to mention Regent Babbage, who joined electronically. He stated that Regent Babbage is “inspiration incarnate,” and she’s a person that is really interested in the human spirit and interested in lifting people up around her. So, there’s a tremendous value in what she does as Regent. He also commented that Regent Vasudevan reaches out before every meeting and has some questions. Sometimes, those questions force him to think about things differently and results in some changes to the agenda that must be made because of something they didn’t think about. Everyone offers something on the Board, and he’s thankful to each one of them.

#### **Executive Session**

Chair Diaz asked for a motion to go into closed session to discuss the potential acquisition of property, the motion being made in accordance with KRS 61.810(1)(b). A motion was made by Regent Tye. The motion was seconded by Regent Castro. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote. The Chair indicated that the Board would now go into closed session, no official business would be conducted in the closed session, and they would make a note of that when the Board returned.

[The Chair adjourned for closed session at 12:47 p.m.]

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn from closed session. The Chair confirmed that no official business was conducted. A motion was made by Regent Duerson. The motion was seconded by Regent Ward. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

[The meeting reconvened in open session at 1:15 p.m.]

#### **New Business**

Regent Eaves made a motion that the Board approve and authorize the President to negotiate for the acquisition of property, approximately 300 acres that adjoins Eastern’s existing property at Meadowbrook Farm for the expansion of Meadowbrook Farm for a purchase price not to exceed 2.5 million dollars without further Board approval. The motion was seconded by Regent Long.

Regent Eaves requested to amend his motion wanting to make it clear that his motion includes the authority of the President to execute the contract or any other documents that's necessary to consummate that transaction. The amended motion was seconded by Regent Long.

EKU Deputy Counsel, Whitney Crowe, called the roll of the Board for a roll call vote. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Diaz requested a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Regent Long to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Regent Vasudevan. The motion passed by voice vote, and the meeting was thereby adjourned at 1:17 p.m.

 \_\_\_\_\_  
Jason Marion

 \_\_\_\_\_  
Date