

**WASHBURN UNIVERSITY OF TOPEKA**  
**BOARD OF REGENTS**  
**MINUTES**  
**October 17, 2024**

**I. Call to Order**

Chairperson Dietrick called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m. in the Kansas Room of the Memorial Union on the Washburn University campus.

**II. Roll Call**

Present were:

Regent Buhler  
Regent Dicus  
Regent Dietrick  
Regent Fisher  
Regent Jeffrey  
Regent Nave  
Regent Padilla  
Regent Romero  
Regent Sourk – arrived at 3:38

The Board Chair announced that Action Item C.1 would be taken up at this time.

**C.1. Eminentes Universitatis**

Presented by Vice President Luther Lee. Mary Schumacher is currently the bursar. She began her career at Washburn in 2008 as an accountant before being promoted to Bursar in 2013. She has implemented several significant changes in Bursar's office to benefit current and former students. Schumacher's office took on additional duties during the pandemic to disburse COVID funds to students in an efficient and compliant manner. Ms. Schumacher is a graduate of Washburn and will retire on November 1.

Bob Stoller has served in many roles in the Information Technology Services for 44 years, the last as director of application services. Stoller joined Washburn as a programmer/analyst in 1980. Stoller helped move Washburn from punch cards to desktop computers and configured Washburn's first email system. Mr. Stoller will retire on November 29.

Motion by Regent Buhler and seconded by Regent Padilla to bestow status of Eminentes Universitatis to Mary Schumacher and Bob Stoller. Motion passed.

Regent Sourk arrives

### **III. Officer Reports**

#### **A. Chair's Report**

Chair Dietrick advised the Board will be doing the first reading of the revised bylaws. Mr. Dietrick extended his thanks to the board working group and staff in working to get these completed. Chair Dietrick noted the bylaws were first written in 1941 and the last major revision was in 1982.

Mr. Dietrick stated he has been meeting with leaders of the university to better understand the processes of the university. He has met with Provost John Fritch, Vice President for Student Life Eric Grospitch, Associate Vice President for Student Life Teresa Clouch and President of Foundation Marshall Meek.

Chair Dietrick reminded everyone and the Regents that Homecoming is coming up and encourages everyone to attend the activities around that event.

#### **B. President's Report**

President Mazachek noted that many things have happened since last meeting. Washburn honored its Family of the Year, hosted Band Day, celebrated a gift to the Henderson Learning Center project and the Concannon Deanship, signed the wall at the new Recital Hall, celebrated 50 years of the School of Nursing and hosted the author of the iRead book this fall as well as other great speakers.

Dr. Mazachek announced for the second straight season Washburn men's tennis won the Fall ITA Cup Men's Doubles National Championship. Tim Hammes and Matthew Earle were the championship team. Last year, Hammes and Santiago Rendon won Washburn's first ever ITA Cup trophy.

President Mazachek announced enrollment showed a record freshman class for the second year in a row. Washburn Tech was also up, and Washburn had largest increase of any four year public institution in Kansas. Dr. Mazachek stated while this is great news, there is more to be done.

President Mazachek said she has been doing town hall meetings with employees at both the Washburn and Washburn Tech campus regarding the survey results with Great Colleges to Work For. Dr. Mazachek stated that she also presented information regarding the campus master plan and discussed the budgeting process.

President Mazachek noted that Washburn has hosted several community engagement events. Dr. Mazachek said Washburn hosted women in science day this week, and over 220 women were on campus to participate in activities with our faculty.

President Mazachek advised this allows young women to experience science as a possible pathway.

Dr. Mazachek stated other events included an open house at Washburn Tech and health professions day.

President Mazachek noted that earlier today the School of Business hosted their annual pitch contest. Over one hundred individuals/groups were competing. Dr. Mazachek advised that the winner will go to California with members of the Greater Topeka Partnership to participate in a larger pitch competition.

President Mazachek reiterated what Chair Dietrick said about Homecoming and please participate in any events you are able. Dr. Mazachek noted November 1 will be a celebration led by the Foundation.

President Mazachek informed the Board following up on the property insurance discussion from the last board meeting there were no bidders lower than anticipated.

### **C. Committee Report(s)**

#### **1. Audit Committee**

Committee Chair Romero reported the committee received information about the audit at this stage. Mr. Romero invited Kaleb Lilly, from the auditing firm of RubinBrown to report.

Mr. Lilly informed the board the audit is nearly complete. He anticipates issuing a clean, unmodified opinion. If something is found in the remaining few tests to be performed, he would notify the Board, but that is not anticipated. Mr. Lilly stated his team received great cooperation from staff. Mr. Lilly concluded his comments by noting that he works with a number of higher education institutions, and Washburn is in very good financial position compared to most others in the region.

Chair Romero said he anticipates bringing the final report to the Board at the December board meeting.

Chair Dietrick introduced new board member Linda Jeffrey as she is attending her first Board meeting.

### **IV. New Business**

#### **A. Consent Agenda**

Motion by Regent Romero and seconded by Regent Sourk to approve the consent agenda. Motion passed.

- 1. Approval of the Minutes of the September 12, 2024 meeting**
- 2. Liquidated Claims Approval – July, 2024**
- 3. Liquidated Claims Approval – August, 2024**

## **B. First Reading**

1. Revision of ByLaws of the Board of Regents (First Reading)

President Mazachek presented the item and stated there was a working group of four members of the board and staff putting the revisions together. Dr. Mazachek noted they are being presented as restated bylaws because significantly rewriting the existing bylaws to reflect best practices for boards. President Mazachek advised the total pages is going from 27 pages to 11 pages, and said one of the changes is that the current bylaws contained policy language that should not be in bylaws.

Chair Dietrick thanked the staff for their work done on the revisions.

## **C. Action Items**

### **2. Health Plan Renewal**

Vice-President for Administration and Treasurer Luther Lee presented the item. Mr. Lee first thanked members of the Human Resources staff Watko BenefitGroup, Washburn's consultant for this process, for their work. Mr. Lee introduced Greg Watkins, CEO of Watko, to discuss some prescription initiatives of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas, who is the administrator of our self-funded healthcare plan.

Mr. Watkins stated his work is to ensure that the benefits provided by employer are competitive with others in the market. Watkins advised costs are up and many employers are facing double-digit increases in costs this year, mostly due to the increased cost in pharmaceuticals. Mr. Watkins said the first initiative would begin January 1, 2025. Participation in this initiative is voluntary and provides a pharmacy benefit manager to work with the participant's doctor to see if an effective but less expensive medication is available. The purpose of the first initiative is to give participants time to work with their physicians to identify alternative medications before the new formulary plan goes into effect. The second initiative, which would begin January 1, 2026, would be a change to the prescription formulary plan.

Brent Krenzin from Blue Cross stated the reason to go to the closed formulary in 2026 is that research shows there are acceptable alternatives that would save costs, but the closed formulary would restrict certain meds from being available.

The delay to 2026 will allow Blue Cross to identify and work with participants whose treatments would be most disrupted to get them set up before 2026.

Vice President Lee presented on costs of healthcare plan. Mr. Lee stated the fund for the plan is trending down since Fiscal Year 2021, and the expected months of claims covered by the plan is down from 16.6 in 2020 to 9.7 in 2025.

In response to a question about best practice for number of months in reserve, Mr. Lee stated generally 3 to 6 months is considered the best practice, but Washburn prefers to have 8 months.

Dr. Mazachek stated Washburn looks to avoid a huge increase in one year, so the university will not have to have a 10 or 20 percent increase in one year for our employees.

Vice President Lee discussed the increase in premiums, which would be going from \$0 to \$5 for tier 1 employees for employee only coverage and from \$0 - \$10 for tier 2 employees only coverage.

Mr. Watkins addressed the issue of benchmarking of premium costs, noting that Washburn's contribution schedule for single coverage is much stronger than the market in general. Watkins added In Topeka, most larger companies charge \$100 for single coverage.

Recommendation for renewal for one year with the new rates.

Motion by Regent Nave and seconded by Regent Romero to renew the University Health Plan for one year with the new premium rates. Motion passed.

### **3. Campus Master Plan**

President Mazachek presented the item and thanked HTK and Eric Just, Assistant Vice President Facilities Services. Dr. Mazachek advised the board this master plan is the guide for how to best use the campus in the future based on what we know today. Circumstances may change that would effect this plan in the future. President Mazachek noted the plan was previously presented at the Board retreat. Based on feedback from the Board and other stakeholders, this plan will have some tweaks from what was presented in August. Dr. Mazachek reminded the Board the campus master plan is a flexible plan in that every project shown will be brought forward to the Board for approval so the board will be able to use the best information at that time to determine if the project should be approved.

President Mazachek advised projects are in two categories – The Next Five Years and Beyond Five Years. Dr. Mazachek informed the Board financing has been defined and some projects in the Next Five Years category are already under way, such as phase 1 of Plass, the second floor of Washburn Tech East, and the Recital

Hall. Other spaces in this category are Lee Arena, Henderson Learning Center, a manufacturing center at Washburn Tech, Mabee, Falley Field, Facilities, and Stoffer Hall. President Mazachek noted Washburn will do a housing study this year to determine how to best serve students which could include adding housing.

President Mazachek then discussed the Beyond Five Years projects. She noted that these are projects being considered but could change. Dr. Mazachek pointed out the biggest project is the health services institute to bring classes from Washburn Tech, School of Applied Studies and School of Nursing to one place to help multi-disciplinary teams and processes to best prepare our students. Other potential projects listed include phase 2 of Plass, athletic spaces, Garvey Fine Arts, and Memorial Union.

Motion by Regent Jeffrey and seconded by Regent Sourk. Motion passed.

#### **4. Morgan Hall 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Enhancements**

Vice President Lee presented the item. Mr. Lee said this project is to enhance and reorganize spaces for recruiting, financial aid and admissions. Bids were sought and eight bids were received. Vice President Lee stated funding is available through the previously approved capital projects budget, and approval is sought for the project with a cost of 614,750.

Motion by Regent Buhler and seconded by Regent Dicus. Motion passed.

#### **5. Benton Demolition**

Vice President Lee presented the item and informed the Board Washburn received state funds to address deferred maintenance. Benton Hall is targeted for demolition by the end of the Spring 2025 semester and restore the area to green space and student focused entertainment area.

Motion by Regent Dicus and seconded by Regent Fisher. Motion passed.

#### **6. Henderson Renovation – Architect Change Order**

Vice President Lee presented the item and reminded the Board they approved moving forward for fundraising and design of Henderson Learning Center, with a budget of \$35 million, at the September 14, 2023, Board meeting. Mr. Lee advised Washburn previously hired an architect and a construction manager at risk, and in March, the project cost increased to \$40 million based on changes. Vice President Lee stated the increase in the project increased costs for the construction manager at risk and funding for the increased costs will come from the budget for the Henderson renovation project.

Motion by Regent Padilla and seconded by Regent Romero. Motion passed.

## **7. Snow Removal**

Vice President Lee presented the item and said Washburn historically used outside vendors to address clearing of snow on campus. Washburn sought interest from several local contractors who perform this type of work. Only one firm could meet our needs of staff and timely response. Mr. Lee informed the Board this expense will be funded from the operating budget.

Motion by Regent Jeffrey and seconded by Regent Romero. Motion passed.

## **D. Financial Update**

Vice President Lee gave a financial update to the board as a follow up to the audit. Mr. Lee thanked his staff, including Rhonda Thornburg, Alex Deters and Debbie White for their hard work.

## **V. Next Meeting Date**

### **A. Board of Regents Meeting – December 5, 2024**

## **VI. Adjournment**

Regent Romero moved the meeting to be adjourned and was seconded by Regent Nave. The meeting adjourned at 5:09 p.m.

---

Marc Fried  
Secretary, Board of Regents