

**WASHBURN UNIVERSITY OF TOPEKA**  
**BOARD OF REGENTS**  
**MINUTES**  
**May 1, 2025**

**I. Call to Order**

Chairperson Dietrick called the meeting to order at 3:30 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 Jeffrey  
Regent Padilla  
Regent Romero  
Regent Sourk

**III. Officer Reports**

**A. Chair's Report**

Chair Dietrick welcomed everyone and shared a celebration was held last week for the men's basketball team. The team had a very successful season making a Final Four appearance. The Washburn Debate team took 3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation at the National Forensic Championship. The Dancing Blues placed second in the pom category at the National Championship in Florida.

Chair Dietrick reported that the Law School hosted the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals in April. The Spring football game was recently held and had great attendance. The Rita Blitt Gallery will reopen this Saturday after a temporary closure for maintenance and the annual Car Show will be held tomorrow at Washburn Tech. The Chair noted it is an exciting time on campus.

**B. President's Report**

President Mazachek shared the University recently celebrated the employees at the annual Employee Recognition Ceremony. This ceremony recognizes outstanding teaching and service awards as well as years of service. The Town Halls wrapped up last week where information shared with faculty and staff included the budget, moves

on campus, and the impact of the Brenneman gift. The University celebrated the opening of the Hurd Recital Hall. It is a beautiful space that truly exceeds the universities' expectations. Last Saturday was the dedication of the baseball stadium. It was named after Washburn's long-standing baseball coach, Steve Anson. Coach Anson represented the University's core values for student athletes in the classroom and on the field. Coach Anson was also known for celebrating the players' successes on the field as well as in their personal life.

President Mazachek reported she attended a meeting this week for the adult education grant. The State perspective of the work Washburn does is considered exemplary, especially in regard to the GED program. The President noted the hard work of Scott Smathers, Dean of Washburn Tech and Mandy Cox, Director of Adult Education, who leads the GED program. Next year they anticipate 335 students in this program. The President met with Modern Think representatives and are working diligently with our leadership on the responses from these reports and how the University can continue to improve. Modern Think was complimentary on the progress our team is making.

President Mazachek noted there will be 11 graduation ceremonies for Spring Commencement. All ceremonies will be held in White Concert Hall. It is an exciting time for the graduates and their families.

President Mazachek introduced Tonya Ricklefs, outgoing President of Faculty Senate.

Tonya thanked the Board for the opportunities she had this past year to communicate with them on behalf of the faculty. The faculty greatly appreciate the Board's leadership. People love working at Washburn and want to continue to make it better. Tonya introduced Jim Schnoebelen, new President of Faculty Senate.

President Mazachek thanked Tonya for her hard work and leadership this past year and then introduced George Burdick and Bella Wood, outgoing President and Vice President of WSGA.

Mr. Burdick and Ms. Wood highlighted the WSGA accomplishments this past year with student organizations, funding, catering, and study spaces. Leadership worked with KDOT and the City of Topeka addressing concerns with the MacVicar street crossing. They found out today it was approved. Mr. Burdick thanked the Board for their continued support and introduced the new President and Vice President, Kate Coulter and Ryan Durst.

President Mazachek introduced Jennifer Wiard, Associate Dean for Student Success.

Dr. Wiard noted the three pillars of student success include holistic academic advising, student success software, and comprehensive student support. Their advising model is a hybrid model with the intention of meeting students where they are. Navigate 360 software creates a coordinated care network. It allows early indicators before the student fails. Academic planning is a module inside Navigate to

encourage early degree planning. The First-Year seminar is still one of the best practices for the students. These efforts have a positive impact on student experience and retention rates.

#### **IV. New Business**

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

Motion by Regent Dicus and second by Regent Romero to approve the consent agenda. Motion passed.

- 1. Approval of the Minutes of the March 13, 2025 meeting**
- 2. Liquidated Claims Approval – February 2025**
- 3. Liquidated Claims Approval – March 2025**
- 4. Resolution for Authorization of Kansas Municipal Investment Pool Transactions**

##### **B. Action Items**

###### **1. Emeriti**

Provost John Fritch presented this item. Dr. Tony Silvestri served as Senior Lecturer for 17 years at Washburn. President Mazachek recommends the Board designate Dr. Tony Silvestri Senior Lecturer Emeriti.

Motion by Regent Sourk and second by Regent Jeffrey to designate Dr. Tony Silvestri Senior Lecturer Emeriti. Motion passed.

###### **2. New Certificate: Artificial Intelligence Literacy and Application**

Provost John Fritch presented this item and noted this AI certificate consists of three new courses including AI Fundamentals, AI Methods, and AI Ethics and will be offered by the Philosophy department. It will appeal to two different audiences – those on campus and those in the workforce in the community.

Motion by Regent Buhler and second by Regent Jeffrey to approve the addition of the Certificate in Artificial Intelligence Literacy and Application. Motion passed.

###### **3. New Certificate: Cybersecurity**

Provost John Fritch shared this certificate responds to strong labor market demand and is highly sought after by prospective students. It provides an option for non-

degree seeking students as well as current students. The university is currently searching for a faculty member for this program.

In response to a question about how many faculty members are needed, Dr. Fritch noted only one faculty member is needed, either to teach the courses or to cover classes currently taught by another faculty member, who would teach the courses for this certificate.

Motion by Regent Sourk and second by Regent Dicus to approve the addition of the Certificate in Cybersecurity. Motion passed.

#### **4. Inactivation of the Bachelor of Science, Computational Physics**

Provost John Fritch presented this item and shared the university is seeking to inactivate the Bachelor of Science in Computational Physics. The primary reason is due to low enrollment and better utilization of faculty. Dr. Fritch responded to a question by advising no employees will be released as a result of this action.

Motion by Regent Buhler and second by Regent Jeffrey to approve the inactivation of the Bachelor of Science in Computational Physics. Motion passed.

#### **5. Healthcare Design Services**

Vice President Luther Lee presented this item for the Health Care Design Services and noted at the October 2024 Board meeting; the Board adopted the campus master plan. Integral to the plan was the Healthcare Institute of Excellence. Mr. Lee introduced Eric Just, Assistant Vice President for Facilities Services.

Eric Just shared the excitement on campus for this project and the great opportunity for our students. The challenges include relocating multiple academic departments to this space and the need to double the size of the current space. The university received 15 proposals, the most for a project on campus. They were evaluated by team members for factors such as similar former work, the size and complexity of the project and the ability to manage it. Their team interviewed four companies and are recommending Clark and Enersen.

Mr. Just introduced Hadley Stolte of Clark and Enersen to present information about the firm and past experience with healthcare related projects.

Motion by Regent Dicus and second by Regent Buhler to approve the design services contract for the Healthcare Institute Project to Clark and Enersen in the amount of \$2,500,000. Motion passed.

#### **6. Healthcare Construction Manager at Risk**

Vice President Luther Lee noted in conjunction with the design services award, the university is also seeking to award the Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) for the project. Bringing a CMAR onto the project early benefits the university through their ability to provide cost savings, assist with scheduling and construction planning during the initial decision-making process. Vice President Lee introduced Eric Just for further information.

Mr. Just noted they evaluated five firms, and it was done concurrently with the design firm which gives the university the best opportunity for planning. Three firms were interviewed and were evaluated for their work on similar projects, including size and complexity. The recommendation is to award this contract to McCown Gordon.

Mr. Just introduced Brian Fuemmeler and Kate Ryan with McCown Gordon Construction to present information about their firm and past experiences with healthcare related projects. Mr. Fuemmeler is a Washburn graduate and noted he will be involved with the entire process. It was noted one of the past projects was a project designed by Clark and Enersen, so they have worked together previously.

Motion by Regent Romero and second by Regent Sourk to approve a contract for a CMAR for the Healthcare Institute to McCown Gordon Construction for a pre-construction fee of \$45,000 and 2.5% of total construction cost. Motion passed.

## **7. Student Activity Fee**

Vice President Eric Grospitch reported the student activity fee is the only fee for Washburn students. This year WSGA is proposing an increase to \$70 per semester. Dr. Grospitch welcomed George Burdick back to the podium.

Mr. Burdick shared WSGA leadership looked for cuts they could make to balance the budget. The Lyft program was cut back substantially, and grants were changed to merit based. They also researched other similar sized schools and their fees. The \$70 fee is lower than the average. It is also enough to cover the remaining financial problems. New leadership will reevaluate next year.

Motion by Regent Romero and second by Regent Jeffrey to approve the WSGA Student Activity Fee be increased to \$70 per semester. Motion passed.

## **8. Housing and Dining Rates**

Vice President Eric Grospitch presented this item. Washburn housing and dining is an auxiliary enterprise. Room rates are derived from several factors including operations, utilities and capital projects and bond payments. The university pays attention to other housing rate increases across the state and tries to stay within a fair range and is also mindful of the rising cost of college for the students. This

year the university proposes a room rate increase of 2.25% and a meal plan rate increase of 3.51%.

Motion by Regent Padilla and second by Regent Sourk to approve the 2025-2026 housing and dining rates which include a room rate increase of 2.25% and a meal plan rate increase of 3.51%. Motion passed.

## **9. Bianchino Pavilion Refresh Project Update**

Vice President Luther Lee noted the Board approved a refresh of the Bianchino Pavilion in the last two capital funding requests. The intent originally was to update finishes in the suites, President's suite and the McGivern room. The university has decided to proceed with a more extensive remodel of the McGivern room. The remodel will create a more energetic environment and enhance the game day experience. It will be completed this summer. The modified scope of this project has increased the expected cost to approximately \$500,000. Senne Construction was previously awarded the project.

Motion by Regent Sourk and second by Regent Buhler to approve the scope change and increased project budget of \$500,000 for the Bianchino Pavilion Refresh. Motion passed.

## **C. Information Items**

### **1. New Intensive English Program Certificate**

### **2. Quarterly Financials**

## **V. Next Meeting Date - June 12, 2025**

## **VI. Executive Session**

Chair Dietrick moved that the regular session of this meeting be recessed immediately following a 5-minute break into executive session for 20 minutes to discuss personnel matters of non-elected personnel. The subject of this executive session will be for performance assessment of the President. The open meeting shall resume at 5:40 p.m. in this same room. Regent Sourk seconded. Motion passed.

Open session resumed at 5:40 p.m. Chair Dietrick moved board go back into executive session for an additional 3 minutes for the same subject and justifications as stated in the previous motion. The open meeting shall resume at 5:43 p.m. in this same room. Regent Dicus seconded. Motion passed

Open session resumed at 5:43 p.m.

## **VII. Adjournment**

Motion by Regent Dicus and seconded by Regent Romero to adjourn the meeting.  
Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 5:44 p.m.

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Marc Fried  
Secretary, Board of Regents