



MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

AUGUST 13, 2020

The meeting was held at 10:30 a.m. via Zoom videoconference.

PRESENT: R. Konrad, Chair  
A. Bryson, Acting Secretary

S. Bennett	C. Rorabeck
W. Boye	B. Ross
C. Burghardt-Jesson	A. Shepard
G. Dick	S. Shortreed
K. Gibbons	D. Simmonds
C. Karakatsanis	C. Stephenson
D. Keddy	K. Sullivan
J. Kum	P. Thomlinson
S. Neiman	J. Toswell
G. Parraga	S. Trosow
S. Ptel	H. Usher

By Invitation: A. Blackburn-Evans, K. Cole, P. Eluchok, A. Hrymak, L. Logan,  
J. O'Brien, T. Rice, M. Ruddock

Secretariat Resource L.A. McKivor

Regrets: E. Holder, M. Lerner

Land Acknowledgement

D. Keddy read a Land Acknowledgement.

BG.2087 REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

The Report of the President, distributed with the agenda, consisted of the following topics: COVID-19 and Fall Semester Plans, and a Return to Campus Plan.

A. Shepard, President & Vice-Chancellor offered his thanks to the Board for convening during the summer. Given the extraordinary circumstances of COVID-19, he expressed that senior administration sincerely desired to maintain a flow of communication with the Board and would be sharing a report outlining the planning for a safe return to campus this fall.



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L Logan, Vice President (Operations & Finance) reported that a phased and gradual return to campus began May 12 with Phase One and will culminate on August 13 with Phase Four. An individual's return to campus is under the direction of individual supervisors. L. Logan outlined that space and capacity planning focuses on the reduced capacity caused by physical distancing guidelines. She reported that capacity assessments of all spaces on campus, including dining halls, common spaces and recreation facilities for a total of 42 buildings and six residences is now complete with the assistance of the firm Perkins+Will. This process informed Western's signage strategy. She indicated that the capacity of campus is forecast to be in the 23,000 to 27,000 range, excluding outdoor spaces.

L Logan commented that facilitating building readiness began in early April with a focus on safety. Examples of work include upgrades to air filtration systems to recommended MERV grade filters and complete signage and wayfinding on campus.

Western's residence expectation was originally for 4100 students, however that number continues to change. L. Logan reported that residences are densified, with most students in single rooms, except for hybrid suites where students have requested to be together. She noted that tents will also be set up outside of most residences to expand usable space for students in addition to two tents generally available on campus. All residence plans have been shared with the Health Unit.

L Logan reported that Western is focusing on educational language that stresses that health and safety is a shared responsibility. The University Students' Council (USC), Western's Communication team and Residence team are working closely together to coordinate messaging that will continue to be built on for other instances such as Broughdale.

A Board member questioned how Western's residence food services will operate given that individuals living off campus may not adhere to strict safety measures. L. Logan commented that initially food services will be restricted to residence members, however plans continue to evolve as situations present and clear protocols are developed.

A Board member asked if there is differentiation between weekdays and weekends. L. Logan expressed that they are conscious of demand on weekends and building security will be maintained with new pr

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J. O'Brien, Associate Vice President (Human Resources) reported that Western is now moving from a health, safety, and well-being perspective to focusing on culture, personal protective equipment availability, and response capabilities for positive COVID cases. She said that Western is continuing to build on the longstanding safety culture to now include classroom and overall campus safety.

J. O'Brien reported that there is extensive signage on campus to assist the community with appropriate safety protocols and practices. She announced that Western will be implementing two new administrative roles to assist with safety protocols. These roles will be in addition to classroom ambassador roles to assist in the loading and unloading of classrooms, ensuring students have completed health assessments and monitoring mask wearing. J. O'Brien indicated that Western is continuing to build a culture that includes multiple methods for educational communication.

To augment the number of sinks on campus, J. O'Brien reported that mobile handwashing units will be available on campus to complement the tent environment, ensuring that social interactions are still permissible within a safe and socially distanced environment.

Western has established a partnership with the London Health Science Center, St. Joseph's lab that J. O'Brien outlined will provide 24-hour testing turnaround for symptomatic individuals. If an outbreak is detected, J. O'Brien indicated that a mobile testing unit is available. Contact tracing will be led by the Middlesex London Health Unit, with information support provided by Western.

J. O'Brien reported that a shift in focus will take place this fall recognizing the difficulties faced by individuals up to this point in the pandemic. Emphasis will be placed on health and well-being for faculty and staff. The Wellbeing team will be focusing on key messages from a mental health perspective. Opportunities for individuals to continue to connect will begin through virtual means with multiple initiatives planned.

A Board member questioned how Western would proceed if guidelines are not followed. J. O'Brien indicated that from an employee perspective the issues would be dealt with from a compliance perspective including coaching. By influencing from a health and safety culture point of view in a productive way through engagement and communication, positive results will ensue. A. Hrymak indicated that compliance has been excellent to this point from the faculty and graduate student communities. Partnership with the USC will target undergraduate student compliance with consistent messaging.

A Board member expressed concern that with 23,000 to 27,000 students on campus, deviation from safety protocols should be expected. It was recommended that Western have a clear and well communicated route for managing dissension.

A Board member questioned how Western's clubs and sports organizations will be guided and governed during this time. A. Hrymak assured members that active engagement with the USC was underway to reiterate safety protocols and to help build community through virtual opportunities.

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A Board member sought clarification for the percentage of first year students experiencing an on-campus course this fall. A. Hrymak expressed that extensive work had been done by the Deans to ensure that components of on-campus activities will be available for students, varying by faculty, but averaging to be 20%. Online alternatives have been created for students unable to participate on campus.

A. Shepard noted that in addition to partnering with the USC, Western has actively sought to engage club level leadership to help influence behavior and student culture. He again expressed the importance of campus safety being a joint responsibility, shared with the student population.

A. Blackburn-Evans, Chief Communications Officer, outlined that in addition to the established and successful methods of communication, a shift in focus is taking place to support culture change communications particularly aimed at students. Engagement with campus student groups is a priority. Being patient, kind and respectful is important messaging.

A Board member offered compliments for the detailed planning and preparation evident in Western's pandemic response.

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QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

A Board member questioned how continued care will be provided to faculty and staff when a

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