



Board of Trustees Weber Orientation Retreat & Coordination Meeting

Miller Administration Building - Betty Hess Lampros Boardroom - 319

3850 S Dixon Parkway, Ogden, UT 84408

Zoom | ID: 889 7565 0731

Thursday, August 27, 2026 | Time: 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

VISION

We will be a leader in transforming lives by meeting all students where they are, challenging and guiding them to achieve their goals academically and in life.

MISSION

We transform lives and communities by educating students of all identities and backgrounds. We nurture student success through a supportive environment, individualized pathways, meaningful personal connections with faculty and staff, teaching and experiential learning, research, and civic engagement.

Trustee Members

Chair Keith Titus

Vice Chair Lori Belnap Pehrson

Ally Isom

Aimee Martinez Thoman

Brent Bishop

Casey Hill

Monet Maggelet

Emmett Busby

Tammy Gallegos

Excused

Brad Wilson

Attendees

Chris Mallett, President

Leslie Durham, Senior VP & Provost

Brent Horn, Associate Provost

Ali Threet, VP for Student Access, Success, and Enrollment Management
Christine Hashimoto, General Counsel & Board Secretary
Mark Halverson, VP for Administrative Services
Bryan Magaña, Executive Director for Marketing Communications
Rachel Badali, Director of Public Relations
Jason Francis, Faculty Senate Chair
Kevin Wallace, Staff Advisory Chair/Financial Aid Director
Tim Crompton, Associate VP for Athletics
Savannah Evans, Executive Assistant
Ella Mitchell, Administrative Associate
Geoff Landward, USHE Commissioner
Taylor Adams, USHE Associate Commissioner

Zoom

Jeremy Shionda

Excused:

Betsy Mennell, VP for University Advancement

Call to order and Identification of Any Potential or Perceived Conflicts of Interest

Chair Titus called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed all in attendance including those on Zoom. He then welcomed Associate Commissioner Taylor Adams to the meeting and asked her to provide a brief background about herself. He also recognized that Commissioner Landward would be joining us later in the meeting. Chair Titus recognized President Mallet was in attendance and welcomed to him to his first WSU Board of Trustees meeting.

Swearing-In of New Trustees

General Counsel swore in Aimee Martinez Thoman and Emmett Busby as the newest trustees to WSU.

New Trustees Introduction

Trustee Aimee Martinez Thoman introduces herself by highlighting her deep lifelong connection to Weber State, noting that the university's Shepherd Union Building is named after her grandfather, J. Farrell Shepherd. She shares that she graduated from the university in the 1990s before moving on to attend BYU Law School. Currently, Trustee Thoman serves as legal counsel for the Utah Judicial Conduct Commission, investigating the state's judges.

Trustee Emmett Busby, a junior studying political science with family ties to Weber State, introduces himself as the incoming student body president. His primary goals include boosting dwindling student involvement on campus, raising awareness of the student association, and ensuring the student voice is effectively represented to the Board of Trustees.

Board Secretary Appointment

Chair Titus appoints General Counsel Christine Hashimoto as Board Secretary. Savannah Evans will continue to serve as Administrative Support to the Board Secretary and the Board of Trustees.

Approval of the Trustee Assignments and the Proposed 2026-27 Full Board of Trustees Meetings

The Board reviewed the Trustee assignments and the proposed 2026-27 full Board of Trustees meeting schedule.

Action: Trustee Brent Bishop moved to approve the Trustees assignments and the proposed 2026-27 Full Board of Trustees meeting schedule, with a second by Trustee Maggelet. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, May 21, 2026

The Board reviewed the minutes from the May 21, 2026, Board of Trustees meeting and the Trustee Assignments.

Action: Vice Chair Pehrson moved to approve the Board of Trustees May 21, 2026 meeting minutes with a second by Trustee Maggelet. The motion passed unanimously.

President Mallett and Chair Keith Titus recognized the work the Trustees do, and thanked them for their time. It was recognized that there are changes happening in USHE, and in higher education, and encouraged continued collaboration and engagement with the community.

Information

General Counsel Hashimoto discussed the following items with the group:

- Trustees Bylaws and Committee Charters
- Open Meetings Act
- Ethics, Discrimination/Harassment
- Conflict of Interest

Counsel Hashimoto briefed the Board of Trustees on quorum requirements for both committees and the full board, alongside providing training on the Open Meetings Act and reminding members to complete their ethics and harassment modules. During the session, the

Board noted a need to clarify specific committee quorum rules and confirmed that all formal communication will continue via email through the Weber Wildcat email accounts. The group emphasized the importance of public transparency when discussing difficult subjects, suggesting that meeting times may need to be extended for thorough and open conversations.

Counsel Hashimoto offered the reminder that every member of the board will need to complete the conflict of interest form and to send it to her as soon as possible.

Media Relations

Rachel Badali, Weber State's Public Relations Director, introduces herself and provides the Board with a media relations guide to help them navigate potential press inquiries. She outlines a three-step process for handling reporters:

- Ask for their deadline
- Involve the university PR team for strategic support
- Notify the board Chair as a courtesy.

After detailing her connection to the university as a two-time alumna with family ties to the school, she emphasizes her office's commitment to supporting the Board. It was suggested by a guest in the room for the Trustees to clarify whether they are speaking on behalf of the Board or in their personal professional capacities when making public statements to avoid any perceived conflicts.

Chair Titus opened the discussion up for questions and the focus turned towards WSU's strategies for helping President Mallett engage in the community. Director Badali provided examples of who President Mallett had met with and steps taken through our local media outlets, social media, and events to help President Mallett know and become familiar with the community.

Information

Structure and Responsibilities: Utah System of Higher Education

USHE Commissioner Geoff Landward details a significant shift in the focus of the Board of Higher Education, emphasizing the role of the system office in supporting institutional governance rather than direct management. He clarifies that while the central board handles statewide oversight, the boards of trustees are now tasked with fiduciary and regulatory responsibilities at the institutional level, such as approving the final budget and monitoring presidential spending. This shift addresses past issues where boards lacked clear statutory authority for oversight. Commissioner Landward also introduced new dedicated staff resources, including Associate Taylor Adams and Associate Commissioner Katie Mazzie,

designed to assist trustees with these complex governance roles, internal audits, and the entire leadership life cycle of a university president from search and onboarding to performance management and succession planning. Additionally, he briefly notes that there is currently no major state legislation expected to impact higher education.

Weber State University

Personal Introduction, Vision, and Discussion

President Chris Mallett invites the importance of open discussion and celebrates Ali Threet's recent appointment as Vice President of Student Access, Success, and Enrollment Management, a division designed to guide students from early recruitment through graduation. He then shares his early observations of the university, praising the highly committed, high-performing staff and the institution's strong financial standing, while also recognizing the employee fatigue caused by a recent period of heavy interim leadership transitions. Noting both the favorable local political climate and broader national headwinds regarding higher education's perceived value, he advocates for viewing these challenges as opportunities to innovate, specifically through stronger K-12 partnerships and deeper student engagement. President Mallett concludes by outlining the timeline for the university's new strategic plan, stating the team will gather community and Board feedback throughout September before presenting the finalized plan for board authorization in October.

Strategic Plan and Discussion

Senior VP & Provost Leslie Durham provided an overview of the upcoming strategic roadmap, transitioning away from the prior 45-point framework toward five comprehensive core pillars centered around student access and institutional excellence. Following the collection of more than 2,000 feedback submissions across campus constituencies, leadership formulated these broad objectives to build upon WSU's legacy while positioning the institution for long-term advancement.

The five strategic goals discussed include:

- Goal 1: Redefine Access as the Jet Fuel for Ambition. This goal focuses on opening gateways for students of all backgrounds to excel. During the discussion, trustees and student leaders suggested reframing the concept of "affordability" as an "accelerant"—emphasizing that a debt-free education accelerates a student's future life goals rather than simply marketing the university as a "cheap" option.
- Goal 2: Become the Nation's Leader for Experience-Driven Education. This goal emphasizes connecting students with individual mentors and providing applied learning opportunities to give them a tangible sense of purpose beyond the classroom.

- Goal 3: Build the University-Industry Innovation Network of the Future in Northern Utah. This initiative aims to cultivate mutually beneficial, networked partnerships with local industries (such as aerospace and defense) to provide transformational, real-world experiences for students across all academic disciplines.
- Goal 4: Compete at the Highest Levels. Rather than trying to be all things to all people, this goal focuses on allocating resources to double down on areas where Weber State is already primed to lead natively, such as healthcare and engineering.
- Goal 5: Attract, develop, and uplift exceptional people to achieve great things together. Recognizing that the university cannot effectively put students first without supporting its workforce, this goal prioritizes the well-being and development of both faculty and staff. It aims to break down traditional silos between departments and helps employees are empowered to innovate and collaborate.

The leadership team will use the Board's feedback, alongside upcoming community and academic town halls throughout September, to refine these pillars. A penultimate draft featuring specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be reviewed in the next meeting, with final authorization expected in October.

Change to the Agenda

Due to time constraints agenda item 7.a. (Academic Affairs) and item 8 (College Presentation: Goddard School of Business & Economics) will not be discussed during this meeting. The Board is invited to refer to the materials in their Board packet for review.

Division Updates

Administrative Services

VP for Administrative Services Mark Halverson provides a brief update on the accomplishments of the Administrative Services division over the past 15 months, including successfully filling several key executive positions, such as a new CIO and Chief of Police. He highlights the division's major energy and sustainability milestone - activating a 5-megawatt battery that runs the entire Ogden campus during power interruptions, putting the university on track to reach carbon neutrality by 2040, ten years ahead of its original goal. VP Halverson also outlines upcoming priorities, such as securing funding for critical capital projects like a new doctoral program for nurse anesthetists and advancing a tuition differential effort to close the cost gap between associate's and four-year degrees.

Following the update, VP Halverson opens the floor for a discussion on how to attract and retain talent in a highly competitive market, noting that the university often loses staff to other state institutions or the private sector due to lower pay rates. Board members suggest that while compensation is important, the university should also emphasize employee development,

career pathing, and unique benefits, citing examples from the private sector such as zero-interest hardship loans and child care reimbursements, to improve retention.

Athletics

Associate VP Tim Crompton provided an update highlighting recent athletic achievements, academic excellence, upcoming season events, and core departmental goals:

- **Athletic & Academic Success:** A freshman thrower on the track team broke two school records and earned a World Championship title and a bronze medal representing England. Furthermore, WSU Athletics led the Big Sky Conference in Academic All-Conference selections for the third consecutive year.
- **Season Highlights & Hall of Fame:** WSU is preparing for its upcoming football and basketball openers under new head coaches, as well as the Fall Hall of Fame ceremony. Inductees include Paralympic discus gold medalist David Blair and WSU's all-time passing leader Cameron Higgins.
- **Three Core Goals for Student-Athletes:**
 1. **Win Championships:** Strive for competitive excellence and experience winning a title in their sport.
 2. **Earn a Degree:** Complete their graduation at Weber State, prioritizing degree retention despite the national rise of the transfer portal.
 3. **Become Lifelong Alumni:** Return and stay connected as proud alums who represent the university well, citing NBA star Damian Lillard as a key example.
- **Academic Integration:** Emphasized the strong collaboration between the athletic department and Faculty Athletics Representative Bryant Thompson to ensure student-athletes are supported both on the field and in the classroom.

Student Access & Success

VP for Student Access, Success, and Enrollment Management Ali Threet, highlighted the division's 450,000 recent student interactions, stressing the need to make these touchpoints meaningful rather than just transactional. She emphasized the importance of fostering "Weber Pride" and eliminating bureaucratic hurdles, often referred to as the "Weber Shuffle," to make Weber State the easiest university in Utah to navigate for its large population of non-traditional, working students.

To achieve a truly customer-centric institution, board members advised implementing comprehensive "journey mapping." By mapping the student experience from early touchpoints in middle school all the way through enrollment and graduation, the university can ensure its

aspirational brand and values of belonging and ambition are consistently communicated at every step.

The discussion then explored the balance between technology and human interaction in student services. While some members suggested integrating AI agents to provide students with 24/7 support and keep pace with AI-driven educational alternatives, others strongly emphasized that the human element remains Weber State's most significant competitive advantage, particularly for a generation of students who crave in-person connection after the isolation of remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

University Advancement

Bryan Magana, Executive Director of Marketing and Communications, provided a brief advancement update. He highlighted three major achievements from the previous year: the successful public launch of the \$200 million Amplify campaign (which has currently raised over \$140 million), effective and transparent communication regarding institutional changes, and the execution of key signature events like building openings and campaign kickoffs.

Looking ahead, the top priorities for the coming year include:

- Fundraising: Raising \$30 million toward the remaining \$60 million goal for the Amplify campaign.
- Presidential Transition: Continuing the robust communication plan for the presidential transition, culminating in an early-year inauguration.
- Strategic Plan: Developing the messaging, branding, and look of the new strategic plan to ensure community buy-in.

Observations / Announcements

Leadership outlined the upcoming timeline for the university's strategic plan, noting they will gather feedback through an Academic Affairs retreat on September 9 and various campus town halls before presenting a refined, operational draft for final board authorization in October.

The Board proposed amending the bylaws to consider creating a new Compensation and Leadership Committee. This dedicated committee would formally manage university succession planning and establish the president's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which now directly dictate 10% of his compensation.

Adjourned

With no other items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:37 p.m.