

LANDER UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Lander University
Greenwood, South Carolina

Tuesday, April 30, 2024
2:00 p.m.

Presiding: Don Scott

Other Members of the Board in Attendance:

Holly Bracknell
Robert Barber
John Craig
Linda Dolny
Ray Hunt
Marcia Hydrick
Don Lloyd
Peggy Makins
Terry Pruitt
Robert Sabalis
Jim Shubert
DeWitt Stone
Angela Strickland
Mark Taylor
Anne Walker

Absent: Catherine Lee

Others in Attendance: President Richard Cosentino; Dr. Jim Colbert, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Joe Greenthal, Vice President for Finance and Administration; Adam Taylor, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Chief of Staff; Boyd Yarbrough, Vice President for Student Affairs; Brian Reese, Director of Athletics; Todd Gambill, Vice President for Enrollment and Access Management; Robyn Hoffman, Vice President of University Advancement; Matt Braaten, Assistant Vice President for Planning Analytics and Decision Support; Megan Price, Assistant Vice President of University Relations and Publications; Sadie Erwin, Executive Assistant to the President; and Graham Duncan, Project Coordinator for University and Governmental Relations.

Guests: Dr. Matthew Hammett, Inaugural Director of the South Carolina Institute for the Prevention of Sexual Violence on College Campuses; Dr. Emily Prince, Chair of the Faculty Senate; Dr. Kerry Hansknecht, Chair-Elect of the Faculty Senate; R.C. LaHay, Head Coach of Lander Wrestling; David Hunsberger (student); and Lucia Solano (student).

Chair Scott called the meeting to order. The chair began the meeting by welcoming Mark Taylor, of Mount Pleasant, to the Board of Trustees. He was elected on April 17 by the South Carolina General Assembly to represent the First Congressional District. Mark Taylor thanked the chair for his welcome, and commented that he looked forward to working with fellow trustees in support of Lander University.

The chair then recognized Adam Taylor, Secretary to the Board of Trustees.

Adam Taylor stated for the record that appropriate publicity had been disseminated in order to comply with the Freedom of Information Act, and that the meeting was in compliance with that Act.

Adam Taylor also reminded trustees of Spring Commencement, which would be held the following day, May 1.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Anne Walker motioned to approve the March 5, 2024 board meeting minutes; seconded by Robert Sabalis.

The board meeting minutes from March 5, 2024 were approved by unanimous vote.

II. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Academic Affairs

Robert Barber was recognized to share the updates found in the Academic Affairs Committee report. The committee brought forward no action items.

The committee noted that Lander is waiting on approvals from the Commission on Higher Education, and from SACSCOC, for three program changes:

1. Master of Science (M.S.) in Criminology and Criminal Justice (new program)
2. Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Cybersecurity, with emphasis in Computer Information Systems and Political Science (100 percent online delivery option)
3. Certificate in Warfare, Military, and Diplomatic Studies (program termination)

B. Enrollment and Access Management / Student Experience and Quality Assurance

Angela Strickland was recognized to share updates from the Enrollment and Access Management / Student Experience and Quality Assurance Committee report. The committee brought forward no action items.

The committee noted that all areas that fall under the Student Success Center (advising, tutoring, social media engagement, testing, and academic alerts) saw an increase in numbers from Spring 2023 to Spring 2024. Lander's First-Year Experience is refining curriculum to include topics, such as college readiness, mental health, societal relationships, professionalism, and technology. Several of these topics will be implemented into the LINK 101 Curriculum for the Fall 2024 semester. Meanwhile, applications, admitted students, and committed students continue to outpace rates from one year prior.

Lucia Solano: Dr. Amanda Darden recognized Lucia Solano, the recent recipient of the 2024 Jordan Smith Undergraduate Fellowship from the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina. Solano is a first-generation Costa Rican American student from North Augusta, majoring in international studies and minoring in public health.

C. Finance, Facilities, and Audit / Governmental and Strategic Initiatives

Don Lloyd was recognized to share the updates found in the Finance, Facilities, and Audit, and Governmental and Strategic Initiatives Committee reports. The committee brought forward the following action items:

1. **FY 2024-25 Tuition, General Fee, Course Fee, and Special Rates Proposal**

The proposal would keep tuition at its current rate for the 2024-25 academic year. General fees would also remain locked-in for the eighth consecutive year.

The proposal would also keep special rates frozen for the 2024-25 academic year. Currently, Lander offers special tuition rates for the following:

- a. National Guard, Military Family and Active Duty Military
- b. University Center of Greenville
- c. Online Undergraduate Programs
- d. Employees of Public Agencies and Nonprofit Organizations
- e. Employees of Corporate Partners

The proposal included no net changes to individual course fees.

A roll call vote is required for action items regarding tuition and fees.

	Yea	Nay
Robert Barber	√	
Holly Bracknell	√	
John Craig	√	
Linda Dolny	√	
Ray Hunt	√	
Marcia Hydrick	√	
Catherine Lee (absent)		
Donald Lloyd	√	
Peggy Makins	√	
Terry Pruitt	√	
Robert Sabalis	√	
Donald Scott	√	
Jim Shubert	√	
DeWitt Stone	√	
Angela Strickland	√	
Mark Taylor	√	
Anne Walker	√	

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

2. FY 2024-25 Housing Rate Proposal

The proposal before the Board of Trustees would increase rental rates to campus residence halls by 3.5 percent, consistent with inflation.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

3. FY 2024-25 Food Service Rate Proposal

Meal plans are contracted with Aramark, and tied to the Consumer Price Index, which is scheduled to increase by six percent.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

4. Financial Audit and Required Communication

The Board of Trustees also heard the results of the scheduled audit, as required by law, and to accept the results of the audit. The audit was completed with an unmodified opinion, or

“clean audit.”

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

D. Institutional Advancement

John Craig was recognized to share updates from the Institutional Advancement Committee report. The committee brought forward no action items.

The committee noted that The Lander Foundation had awarded 611 scholarships, to date, which was a total of \$773,452 in scholarship support. Meanwhile, total giving through March 31, 2024, exceeded the total giving in fiscal year 2023.

E. Policy

Robert Sabalis was recognized to share updates from the Policy Committee report. The committee brought forward nine action items:

1. P-Card Manual Policy

This policy establishes a University-wide manual that sets guidelines and regulations for use of a State of South Carolina Purchasing Card (also known as a P-Card). The policy includes, but is not limited to, administration, state policies, authorization, transaction limits, emergency procedures and training protocol.

2. Energy Control Lockout Policy

This policy establishes the Lockout/Tagout (LOTO) Program, which sets forth standards for ensuring the safety of employees when performing maintenance, service, or cleaning of powered machinery by protecting them from the unexpected energization, startup or release of hazardous energy.

3. Hazard Communication Program Policy

This policy addresses the safe handling and use of hazardous chemicals on the Lander University campus. The policy includes, but is not limited to, responsibilities of certain employees, inventory of hazardous chemicals, labeling requirements, performance of hazardous tasks and training protocols.

4. Powered Industrial Trucks Policy

This policy sets forth standards for ensuring the safety of employees when operating powered industrial trucks or when working around them.

5. Policy on Policies

This policy is a revision of an existing policy that covers the establishment, implementation, and enforcement of Lander University policies.

6. Faculty Handbook Revision: Constitution of the Faculty Senate

This revision concerns the jurisdiction and responsibilities of the Faculty Senate regarding its input over Lander University policies.

7. Faculty Handbook Revision: Reappointment of Non-Tenure Track and Probationary Tenure-Track Faculty

This revision provides clarity for the process of reappointment of non-tenure track and probationary tenure-track faculty.

8. Faculty Handbook Revision: Sabbatical Leave

This revision provides a clear definition of sabbatical leave, and provides clarity on the process for proposing a sabbatical leave.

9. Reading Day Policy

This is a revision to existing policy that provides clarity to the restriction of on-campus activities allowed on Reading Day.

The committee recommended adopting these policies as a package.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

F. Student Affairs / Intercollegiate Athletics

Ray Hunt was recognized to share updates from the Student Affairs / Intercollegiate Athletics Committee report. The committee brought forward no action items.

The committee noted that Lander University's CARE team has been actively engaged in promoting safety, student well-being, and a supportive learning environment, through responsive interventions with students regarding various concerns related to behavior, mental health, and student grievance.

David Hunsberger: Brian Reese introduced Head Wrestling Coach R.C. LaHay and David Hunsberger, who won the 165-pound National Championship and helped the Bearcats win their second consecutive National Runner-up finish at the 2024 NCAA Division II Wrestling Championships.

III. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The president gave the following updates to the Board of Trustees:

The president began his discussion by mentioning several pressures he categorized as external challenges to higher education. These included:

College Closures: The president shared with the Board of Trustees articles from the Chronicle of Higher Education showing that smaller colleges and universities are downsizing and closing at an alarming rate. He stressed the importance of Lander University in continuing to remain competitive.

FAFSA: Changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) have posed significant obstacles and delays for colleges and universities as they try to award financial aid packages to students. Lander's Financial Aid team, however, is working closely with students to ensure they receive updates regarding their aid packages in time for the Fall 2024 semester.

Overtime Rules, Department of Labor: The federal governments new regulations regarding overtime for non-exempt employees is forcing industries, including higher education, to consider cutting positions.

Title IX Final rule: The president shared a printed-out version of the Title IX Final Rule, which includes extensive updates that colleges and universities are currently navigating to ensure compliance with the new regulations.

Rising Cost of Higher Education: The operating costs at institutions of higher learning continue to rise, even as colleges and universities try to keep their tuition rates affordable for students.

Political Interference: Higher education is under scrutiny from state lawmakers. Concerns are regularly voiced about the expense of state colleges and universities.

Student Political Protests: The president suggested the Policy Committee craft a policy relating to student conduct and political protests. While the president stressed that Lander University does not experience political protests currently, he recommended that administration prepare for how to effectively manage cases in the future, as protests on college campuses significant national attention.

Significant Focus on Employment: The president noted that there is enormous pressure for institutions of higher education focus their attention on preparing successful candidates for gainful employment in the workforce after graduation. However, he noted that this is one of Lander University's greatest strength, saying that Lander successfully marries workforce development in a rich liberal arts environment.

Urban vs. Rural Universities: The president reminded board members that there is a significant movement in higher education towards mega universities, where administrators have more resources to address the rising operating costs. He said that, while this poses a challenge for rural schools, Lander continues to target the student who is not interested in the large, urban university, but prefers a smaller environment.

Mental Health: Students in higher education today continue to struggle with mental health issues, and institutions of higher education are challenged with providing the heightened number of students seeking mental health accommodations with the resources they need.

Alternative Paths to Education: The president noted that there continues to be a push to online educational programs, as well as two-year educational programs. He noted that Lander is addressing the demand for online educational options through the College of Graduate and Online Studies.

The president concluded his report by noting several internal achievements made by Lander University. These included:

Faculty Evaluation System: The president noted the success of the new faculty evaluation system, Watermark, which is one of the top software packages on the market and greatly improves Lander's ability to collect and evaluate faculty evaluations.

Minor Requirement: Administrators are exploring adding a university-wide minor requirement that would apply to most students, depending on their major. The president noted that a minor requirement would allow students to get more exposure in coursework outside their discipline, making Lander graduates broadly-educated, multi-faceted employees. A minor would also provide first-year students with a natural fallback major, which would improve retention.

Changes in Structure: The president mentioned that administrators are closely studying where degree programs are housed, and how colleges and departments are structured at Lander, compared to how they are structured at other colleges and universities. The president noted the importance of making sure that Lander University's brand marketing strategy should reflect the educational experience students are pursuing.

AI Coordinator: Lander University is exploring the addition of an AI coordinator position that will assist faculty with implementing the use of AI in classrooms, giving students more exposure with AI, and also foster discussions of how to use AI in an ethical way.

New Facilities Updates: \$1.8 million in operational projects will be completed on Lander's campus this summer. The University currently has a total of \$4.5 million committed to upgrading its facilities.

Commencement Speaker: The president shared with the Board of Trustees that Dr. Matt Logan would serve as the keynote speaker for the Spring Commencement Ceremonies. Dr. Logan is the CEO of Self Regional Healthcare, a proud community partner with Lander University and the School of Nursing.

SCIP: Dr. Matt Hammett, the inaugural director of the South Carolina Institute for the Prevention of Sexual Violence on College Campuses (SCIP) gave an overview of the updates of the SC Institute on the Prevention of Sexual Violence on College Campuses. Hammett emphasized the importance of providing survivor care for those who have experienced sexual violence, as well as safety measures that prevent sexual violence from occurring on college campuses.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/REPORTS

A. Faculty Senate

Dr. Prince was recognized to give a report from the Faculty Senate.

B. Staff Senate

Patrick Moore was unable to attend the meeting of the Board of Trustees. His report was provided to board members in writing.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The motion was made by Robert Sabalis to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Ray Hunt.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.