

**LANDER UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Lander University  
Greenwood, South Carolina

Tuesday, September 10, 2024  
10:00 a.m.

**Presiding:** Don Scott

**Other Members of the Board in Attendance:**

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

**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; Matthew Hammett, Executive Director of the SC Institute for the Prevention of Sexual Violence on College Campuses, and Interim Dean of Students; 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:** Mya Atten, of the Index-Journal.

Chair Scott called the meeting to order.

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 that the next meeting of the Lander University Board of Trustees would take place Wednesday, December 11. Commencement ceremonies would take place Thursday, December 12.

## **I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Anne Walker made the motion to approve the June 25, 2024 board meeting minutes; seconded by John Craig.

The board meeting minutes from June 25, 2024 were approved by unanimous vote.

## **II. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **A. Academic Affairs**

Dr. Robert Barber shared updates with the Board of Trustees from the Academic Affairs Committee report. Some items of interest included the following:

Lander University is now offering a new program, the Master of Science in Criminology and Criminal Justice. This program was designed with direct input from law enforcement and criminal justice professionals, and responds to a growing need for workforce development in this sector of South Carolina.

Lander University has also added online delivery to its Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity program. One certificate program, the Military, Warfare and Diplomatic Studies certificate program, was eliminated due to low student interest.

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

Angela Strickland shared updates with the Board of Trustees from the Enrollment and Access Management / Student Experience and Quality Assurance Committee report. Some items of interest included the following:

The Spring 2024 semester saw a record number of advising appointments, with a total of 1,116 appointments between students and advisors. Meanwhile, a majority of students who were previously placed on academic probation improved their grade point averages and returned to good academic standing.

The committee also reported that admissions is off to a good start for the Fall 2025 semester, with an increase in the number of freshman applications. Admittance rates are also higher than at the same point in cycle.

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

Don Lloyd shared updates with the Board of Trustees from the Finance, Facilities, and Audit / Governmental and Strategic Initiatives Committee report. Some items of interest included the following:

For the fourth year in a row, Lander University has received state funding in excess of \$27 million each year. The state's budget for Fiscal Year 2024-25 included \$31.6 million in total funding for Lander University.

Meanwhile, Lander University closed Fiscal Year 2023-24 with a cash growth of over \$3.6 million in funds. The Division of Finance and Administration has implemented new cost-saving measures, which have resulted in over \$2 million in cost savings. These saved funds can be re-invested in new student programming and educational needs across the university.

### **D. Institutional Advancement**

John Craig shared updates with the Board of Trustees from the Institutional Advancement

Committee report. Some items of interest included the following:

The Lander Foundation's endowment was at an all-time high of over \$26 million in late August. Meanwhile, the University Advancement team is making new pushes to increase monthly giving among the university's alumni. This encourages more alumni to give to Lander University on a recurring basis.

**E. Policy**

Bob Sabalis shared updates with the Board of Trustees from the Policy Committee report. The committee brought forward the following action items:

**1. Bloodborne Pathogen Policy**

This policy describes Lander University's Bloodborne Pathogen (BBP) and Aerosol Transmissible Diseases (ATD) Exposure Control Plan, which has been established to ensure a safe and healthful work environment and to act as a performance standard for all employees. This goal is accomplished by minimizing employee exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials.

This policy was approved by unanimous vote.

**2. Ladder Safety Policy**

This policy focuses on safety and regulatory compliance related to use of ladders at Lander University. This policy describes a program at Lander University that has been established to ensure a safe and healthy working environment and to act as a performance standard for all employees.

This policy was approved by unanimous vote.

**F. Dean of Students / Intercollegiate Athletics**

Terry Pruitt shared updates with the Board of Trustees from the Dean of Students / Intercollegiate Athletics Committee report. Some items of interest included the following:

The Division of Student Affairs has been reorganized to create the new Office of the Dean of Students. Dr. Matthew Hammett, executive director of the South Carolina Institute for the Prevention of Sexual Violence on College Campuses (SCIP), was asked to serve as the interim Dean of Students while the university conducted a national search for a new Dean of Students.

The committee also shared that Lander's Bass Fishing Team won its first ever national championship.

**III. PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

President Cosentino shared a report with the Board of Trustees. Some items of interest include the following:

**Lander Launch:** The president praised Dr. Amanda Darden and the Student Experience and Quality Assurance team for completing another successful Lander Launch. This is a new student experience held prior to the start of classes to welcome Lander's new students to campus and foster a sense of belonging at Lander.

**Changes in FAFSA:** The president shared with the Board of Trustees some of the challenges that Lander University experienced with the rollout of the new Free Application for Federal Student Aid

(FAFSA). Among these challenges was a delayed opening date for new applications. This compressed the time in which students could make decisions about college attendance.

**Campus Security:** The president reminded faculty of the campus security training seminar that all employees at Lander University must complete on an annual basis. Since 2019, Chief Greg Allen has led this seminar so that all employees are properly trained in ways to keep Lander's campus and students safe from potential dangers.

**SC Institute on the Prevention of Sexual Violence on College Campuses:** The president recognized Dr. Matthew Hammett for his work with colleges and universities across South Carolina in his role as the executive director of SCIP. Hammett shared that the institute is hiring for additional support roles to help manage SCIP, and that he is working with partner institutions to compile the state's first comprehensive report on sexual violence prevention (responding to Proviso 117.177 of the state's budget for FY 2024-25).

**Cybersecurity:** The president asked Joe Greenthal to share information related to data breaches, ransomware and cybersecurity breaches across higher education. Greenthal noted that many colleges and universities are losing time, money, and data due to ongoing issues with cybersecurity. Greenthal also commented on several major ongoing infrastructure projects, including network and WiFi upgrades, completed over the summer of 2024. Lander University has invested over \$1 million to help protect the institution's data and network. Meanwhile Abdallah Haddad, Lander's chief information officer, has contributed to a professional white paper related to cybersecurity education and infrastructure that helps train other institutions of higher learning across the country.

**Revitalization:** The president reminded the Board of Trustees of the several recently completed and ongoing campus revitalization efforts taking place at Lander University. Renovations have been completed to the tower of Laura Lander Hall, the pool and pavilion, the dining hall, and the Chipley Hall traffic circle. Other projects include renovations to Brookside, Genesis Hall, and the resurfacing of the university's parking lots. New signage was added on Montague Ave. for the Jeff May Complex. Upcoming projects include the new information commons (library), renovating the existing library into new classroom space, and construction of the new nursing building. These new construction projects are in the final stages of approval from the State of South Carolina, and Lander hopes to break ground on new buildings soon.

**Federal Request:** Lander University is working through the appropriate paperwork to access funding it received from the federal government (\$2.4 million) that will be used to supply the School of Nursing with new technology inside the school's simulation labs.

**Vice President for Marketing and Communications:** The president has selected Brian Apfel to serve as the university's Vice President for Marketing and Communications. Apfel is a seasoned marketing professional with over 20 years of experience in higher education and corporate marketing, public relations, and brand development.

#### IV. OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

##### A. Faculty Senate

Dr. Kerry Hansknecht was introduced to the Board of Trustees as the chair of the Faculty Senate for the 2024-25 academic year. Hansknecht shared updates with board members found in the Faculty Senate report.

##### B. Staff Senate

Taylor Haigler was introduced to the Board of Trustees as the chair of the Staff Senate for the 2024-25 academic year. Haigler then shared updates with board members found in the Staff Senate report.

**V. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The chair entertained a motion to enter into executive session for the following purposes:

1. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements and proposed sale or purchase of property, the receipt of legal advice where the legal advice relates to a pending, threatened, or potential claim or other matters covered by the attorney-client privilege, settlement of legal claims, or the position of the public agency in other adversary situations involving the assertion against the agency of a claim.
2. Discussion of employment, compensation, promotion, discipline or release of an employee, a student or person regulated by Lander University.

Bob Sabalis made the motion to enter into executive session; seconded by Terry Pruitt.

The motion was passed by unanimous vote. The Board of Trustees entered into executive session and returned at the call of the chair.

No action was taken in executive session.

The Board of Trustees returned to open session.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

The motion was made by Anne Walker to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Bob Sabalis.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.