

**Minutes  
UWF Board of Trustees  
Foundation Room  
University of West Florida  
August 23-24, 2001**

**The agenda:**

President's greetings

Action items

1. Election of chair
2. Election of vice chair
3. Discussion and adoption of UWF Board of Trustees bylaws.
4. Proposed meeting schedule
5. Discussion of presidential searches
6. Other issues
7. Orientation

Adjournment

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President Morris Marx convened the first meeting of the University of West Florida Board of Trustees at 4:15 p.m., August 23, 2001 in the Foundation Room of the University of West Florida. Members present were:

Honor Bell  
Pam Bilbrey  
Travis Bowden  
Angie Bowler  
K.C. Clark  
Carol Dover  
Lornetta Epps  
Sharon Hess Herrick  
Collier Merrill  
JoAnn Morgan  
Eddie Phillips  
Roy Smith

**Agenda item 1**

President Marx greeted the Board and the members of the audience and explained that the first order of business for the Board to begin operation was to elect a chair. He opened the floor for nominations. Trustee Smith nominated Trustee Merrill, and there were several seconds. Nominations were then closed, and Trustee Merrill was unanimously elected the charter chair of the charter UWF Board of Trustees. Chair Merrill said he welcomed the opportunity. As a former member of the Board of Regents, Trustee Merrill said he was responsible for taking a statewide view of issues, but that he always kept the University of West Florida in the back of his mind. He said that he was honored by the opportunity.

### **Agenda item 2**

Chair Merrill nominated Trustee Phillips as the vice chair, and it was seconded by Trustee Epps and others. There were no other nominations, and Phillips was elected unanimously. He said that he would work to make the UWF Board the best in the system because UWF is one of the best in the State University System.

### **Agenda item 3**

After each of the trustees introduced themselves to the audience, Trustee Bell recommended adoption of the bylaws, which was seconded by Trustee Clark. They were unanimously adopted.

### **Agenda item 4**

Action on establishing a meeting schedule for the Board for the 2001-002 fiscal year was postponed. Instead the Board engaged in a discussion on the merits of meeting more frequently than four times. Trustee Clark said that more frequent meetings may be necessary during the first year of operation because of the need for the Board to familiarize itself with the university and the important issues it will face. Trustee Smith suggested monthly meetings, while Trustee Bilbrey said there is a need for more than four. Trustee Bell proposed there be six scheduled meetings during the year, and the Board would determine if those meetings should be conducted in person or via telephone conference call. Chair Merrill said that a revised schedule reflecting the comments of the Board would be supplied to the trustees for their review, and he directed Keith Goldschmidt to prepare such a list for review during the "other business" section of the Board's Friday portion of the meeting.

### **Agenda item 5**

Chair Merrill introduced President Marx for comments. His full comments follow:

*"Chairman Merrill and members of the Board,*

*"Over a year ago, I asked Collier Merrill in his capacity as regent and Chancellor Herbert to consider a search to replace me. Shortly afterwards, the demise of the Board of Regents began. The three of us agreed that this period of uncertainty was inopportune for a presidential search. Now that we have our Board to choose, evaluate and support a new president, I ask that you begin a search for my successor. I make this request not out of discontent with my job. I have never enjoyed being president more, and I am excited by the prospect of working with you. I ask for this search in order to allow me to spend the end of my professional life as a faculty member. I hope to continue serving the University of West Florida, but in another capacity.*

*"I have no personal timetable for the search or for the remainder of my time in office. I simply offer to you my willingness to serve until replaced. Thank you for your consideration of my request."*

Chair Merrill said, "I can't say enough about President Marx." The university is in great shape, and his willingness to work with the Board timetable "is going to lead us to a very good transition. We won't need an interim." Chair Merrill thanked him for his service, adding that "his work here will make it easy to find a president."

Several factors will play into the UWF search, however, and that includes the fact that other Florida institutions are, or will be, seeking presidents, Chair Merrill said. FAMU and New College are looking, and he has heard of other presidents who may be stepping down, he said. "The sooner we get moving, the better," he said.

Merrill informed the Board that there are several key issues for the Board to consider as it commences the search:

- The Florida Board of Education is developing guidelines, which should be available by October,
- the timeframe for a presidential search extends 34 weeks,
- development of a presidential assessment model is important to present to candidates so they know how their performance will be measured,
- the Board will have to develop a compensation package for the new president, and,
- two committees will help in the search process. The enabling legislation requires an advisory committee, and Chair Merrill proposed that two committees be established: The Trustee Search Committee and the Search Advisory Committee, which will be comprised of 15 members from the

university and 15 from the community. It will work closely with a professional search firm.

Chair Merrill said the Board will conduct a conference call in September to further discuss the process. Trustee Clark also commended Marx: "We are not searching out of turmoil. The president has built a substantial team."

A general discussion ensued about the committee process, with consensus reached that a Trustee Search Committee should consist of three-to-five members, and nominations from the Trustee Search Committee will be sought from the university and community, after guidelines are established.

### **Agenda item 6**

The Board unanimously approved a resolution authorizing the president or his designee to enter into a contract with American Express for the sole purpose of allowing trustees the opportunity to use such cards for their travel and other Board-related expenses. A general discuss was conducted on the committee structure for the Board of Trustees. Chair Merrill said he would like to have two committees, one dealing with finance and the other with academic and student affairs.

President Marx said the bylaws envision that the Board will create committees as necessary, depending on the key issues expected to come before the Board. Finance requires a committee, and governmental relations will require a great deal of attention because of the continued reorganization of higher education, he said.

Vice Chair Phillips suggested the Board consider having liaisons with different areas of the university, who could attend university committee meetings.

Trustee Clark agreed with the idea of liaisons, citing the UWF Foundation as one group where a Board liaison would be beneficial. "We would want to have an open conduit with them." The liaisons would fill an important function because it is important to get information flowing into the Board.

### **Agenda item 7**

The Board began its orientation sessions conducted by university staff. Trustees visited a student housing unit, the Archaeology Institute and were given a tour of the campus.

Presentations were:

- University mission and vision
- Community partnership in university strategic planning
- The UWF Partnership Strategic Plan
- Programs of Distinction: Meeting the educational, research and service needs of the region through the UWF niche and brand
- Enrollment and retention
- A student-centered university: Programs and the Students First Initiative
- Pensacola's living history
- Research and economic development in building communities
- A technological campus for the digital age
- The faculty role on campus
- An overview of UWF's financial, administrative and support operations.

The Board recessed from orientation activities at 6:27 p.m. and reconvened at 8:30 a.m. Friday, August 24, in the Alumni Room.

### **Other business**

Following orientation, the Board resumed the business portion of the meeting at 3:10 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 24.

Chair Merrill said the Legislature did not create a position for faculty on the boards of trustees. Because faculty are an integral part of the university, he appointed Trustee Smith as the faculty liaison to meet regularly with representatives of the Faculty Senate and the United Faculty of Florida chapter.

A general discussion on university issues ensued, and it included Trustee Bilbrey and others asking for comparative data on the university and the State University System of Florida.

Trustee Bell asked how the administration felt about trustees coming onto campus to meet with university personnel to receive a more thorough briefing on select topics.

Chair Merrill said much of that information can be obtained through the president's office, but he sees no problem in talking with anyone on campus. President Marx agreed.

Trustee Clark said it was important for the Board to remember that when they speak to individuals they do not speak for the entire board, only as individual Board members.

Vice Chair Phillips said trustees should have the freedom to meet with university staff because it will give trustees a better feel for the departments.

Trustees were given a revised proposed meeting schedule for their review and later comment.

They also were given basic criteria for nominees to the Search Advisory Committee, which calls for all nominations to be submitted by September 24.

A conference call was tentatively scheduled for September 27 to further discuss the presidential search and other business.

The meeting adjourned at 3:26 p.m.