Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Utah State University Board of Trustees held via videoconference commencing at 10:03 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT
Jody K. Burnett Chair
Kent K. Alder Vice Chair
Sami I. Ahmed
Laurel Cannon Alder
John Y. Ferry
David H. Huntsman
Wayne L. Niederhauser
Jacey Skinner
Terryl Warner

MEMBERS EXCUSED
Gina Gagon
David A. Petersen

UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT
Neil N. Abercrombie Vice President, Government Relations
Jodi Bailey Chief Audit Executive
Lisa Berreau Vice President, Research
David T. Cowley Vice President, Business and Finance
Teresa Denton Staff Assistant
Francis D. Galey Executive Vice President and Provost
John H. Hartwell Vice President and Director, Athletics
Mica A. McKinney General Counsel and Vice President, Legal Affairs
Eric Olsen Associate Vice President, Student Affairs
Sydney M. Peterson Secretary of the Board of Trustees
William M. Plate Vice President, University Marketing and Communications
Laurens H. Smith Interim Vice President, Statewide Campuses
Timothy Taylor President, Faculty Senate
Robert W. Wagner Vice President, Academic and Instructional Services
Kenneth L. White Vice President, Extension; Dean, College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences; Director, Agricultural Experiment Station

Chair Burnett called the meeting to order and welcomed those present for their attendance.

Action: Trustee Kent Alder moved in accordance with 52-4-205 of the Utah Code, that the Trustees go into a Closed Session for the sole purpose of discussing the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of individuals, pending or reasonably imminent litigation, and the possible sale of real property. Trustee John Ferry seconded the motion. The voting was unanimous in the affirmative.

Chair Burnett reopened the Regular Meeting at 10:51 a.m., thanking those present for their attendance.
I. STRATEGIC AGENDA

A. The State of USU’s Recruiting, Retention and Student Success (Appendix A)

Vice President Robert Wagner provided updates on recruiting, retention, and student success at Utah State University (USU). He listed a few of the challenges facing higher education, i.e., higher education reputation, campus safety, COVID-19, mental health, out-of-state competition, diversity and inclusion, etc.

Vice President Wagner and Associate Vice President Janet Anderson explained the strategic enrollment management plan at the Board of Trustees Retreat last year. Phase 1 was completed in January 2020. Action activities included: diversity recruitment and student success, financial aid leveraging, parent engagement, Logan campus recruitment, best practices advising, exploratory advising, Student Money Management Center, freshmen/sophomore experience, and competency-based education programming. With the COVID-19 pandemic, many of these areas will not receive the institutional investments that were originally planned. All these programs are continued but not in the way they were originally planned.

Each of the action strategies include goals and data collection to gauge success. Goals are set by comparing peer institutions and other in-state institutions. Setting goals, collecting data, and marking progress are critical to the enrollment management process.

Phase 2 will involve colleges creating their own strategic enrollment management plans. However, this phase was put on hold when the pandemic began.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, the Logan campus had much of the fall 2020 recruiting completed. A couple of statewide campuses do their recruiting in the spring and were affected by the pandemic. USU has held a series of virtual events called What’s Next Wednesdays throughout April and May for prospective students and parents covering topics such as residency, campus tours, scholarships, and college-specific presentations. Each session was recorded for future viewing. These have been very successful with 669 virtually attending and 2,577 viewing the recording later. Emails, mailers, texting, phone calls and chats are all being used to recruit students and communicate with returning students.

Recruitment this fall will coincide with alumni events across the country. Alumni are instrumental in staffing tables and talking to prospective students and their parents.

Fall 2020 enrollment when compared to last year at this time is down 2.4%. This can be attributed to the pandemic with the Blanding campus seeing a big decrease in Navajo student enrollment since the Navajo nation has been hit strongly by the COVID-19 virus. Also, many students are waiting to see what the campus will look like before deciding to enroll. Over 100 students have signed contracts and paid deposits for on-campus housing but have not registered for classes. Emails will be sent soon to tell students what face-to-face classrooms will look like and what in-person services will be available on campus. Another explanation for the decrease in enrollment is the number of degrees that have been awarded recently. There was a surge in bachelor’s and master’s degree
graduation numbers last fall.

Retention efforts include phone calls by outreach specialists calling students who attended last spring but have not registered for fall. Approximately 4,000 students have been contacted through calls or emails and 401 of them have registered for fall.

The COVID-19 pandemic requires some changes to teaching and learning. Classroom capacity will be reduced to 30-45% to comply with Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) and Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines. Campus classrooms will not be able to accommodate all students. Departments have looked at courses and, where possible, have changed the delivery method from face-to-face to other methods including web broadcast, online, interactive video conferencing, hybrid, and blended. Faculty and students will be wearing face masks to classes. Classrooms will be cleaned and sanitized each day and between each class period. Thanksgiving break will be the end of on-campus classes with the last two weeks and finals being held remotely.

USU received $8.7M from the CARES Act directed specifically to students with 5,700 spring students received funds. Of the award, $3.7M has been spent with the remainder being held to help students this fall.

President Cockett has organized several committees to deal with issues related to COVID-19. USU will monitor local and state agencies when they issue warnings and will be flexible to accommodate any changes that need to be made. Provost Francis Galey explained that faculty are prepared to change class delivery methods quickly if they need to do so. There are teams looking at contact tracing and testing to attack an outbreak if it happens.

The traditional tuition structure may be perceived as excessive when examining virtual classrooms. Virtual learning is different but not necessarily less expensive than the traditional learning environment. The Registrar’s Office looks at grade distribution and surveys faculty and students about their experience and outcomes to assess the quality of education. With the pandemic, a number of students struggled with the sudden move from face-to-face to online teaching. USU has provided training to faculty and students to help them better navigate technology. USU is nationally ranked in its ability to provide remote and distance education formats.

USU faculty are using the summer months to take workshops, view online tutorials, and learn tools to better address pandemic-specific teaching and learning strategies. There will be unexpected events, but USU is confident it can adapt and evolve in a more effective way.

II. CHAIR’S REPORT

A. Information Item

1. Legislative Update

Vice President Neil Abercrombie offered an update from the special state legislative session held last week. The FY21 budget was finalized, and the state is
in a better position than anticipated. Higher education will receive a 2.5% budget cut across the board. Each institution will be able to decide how that cut will be enacted. USU received a new state one-time appropriation of $3M for the Sustainable Electrified Transportation Center (SELECT) and the Adaptive Scalable Portable Infrastructure for Responsive Engineering (ASPIRE) Research Center. USU also received $900,000 on-going funding for the rural online initiative which helps employers train staff to work remotely and one-time funding for advanced manufacturing. The College of Humanities and Social Sciences building request of $15M has not been funded, but there is a possibility for a bond package to be funded later this summer.

2. New Board of Higher Education and Its Interactions with Institutional Boards of Trustees

Senate Bill 111 which passed this winter consolidated higher education and technical education establishing the Board of Higher Education which will go into effect July 1, 2020. Interim Commissioner Dave Woolstenhulme is working on a summary of responsibilities and authority. By policy the new Board of Higher Education will shift some responsibilities to the institutional Boards of Trustees. Chair Burnett asked Interim Commissioner Woolstenhulme to attend the Board of Trustees workshop on August 14 to present the final version of the policy and to discuss what it will mean to trustees.

3. Next Board of Trustees Meeting
The next Board of Trustees Meeting and Workshop will be held on August 14, 2020, at USU Eastern in Price.

III. PRESIDENT’S REPORT

A. Information Items

1. Athletics and Mountain West Conference Updates (Appendix B)

Vice President John Hartwell reported that student-athletes faced the adversity of going to remote learning last spring and prospered. Student-athletes spend four or more hours a day practicing, conditioning, and recovering related to their sport. With the pandemic, student-athletes had more time for academics. Student-Athlete Services staff and coaches contacted student-athletes daily to make sure they were getting what they needed for their classwork. Spring semester student-athletes received an average GPA of 3.51 which is an all-time high for USU Athletics. The cumulative GPA for all student-athletes was 3.36 with 40 student-athletes being honored on the Dean’s List. Of all student-athletes, 85% posted a 3.0 or higher GPA. The graduation success rate was 93% which is the highest in the Mountain West Conference.

The COVID-19 pandemic is causing many financial challenges. With the cancelation of the NCAA basketball tournament, USU lost $960,000 from the anticipated NCAA distribution. At USU, students pay an athletics student fee which allows them to attend athletic events without purchasing tickets. Any reduction in
enrollment would have a significant impact. Football season ticket sales for the upcoming season are at a 64% renewal rate which is down about 6-7% from this same time last year. Philanthropic giving is down due to the stock market downturn which affected donors’ portfolios. With social distancing at the stadium, actual attendance may be down as much as 50% which impacts corporate sponsorships.

The pandemic has resulted in about 120 sports at institutions across the country being dropped as cost-cutting measures. USU sponsors 16 sports which is the NCAA minimum. Athletics’ priorities are to save sports, keep scholarships, and protect jobs. Some vacancies in positions have been left open to avoid layoffs.

Athletics will end FY20 with a balanced budget. Money was saved with the cancelation of spring sports and the suspension of travel. The NCAA has stopped all on-campus and off-campus recruiting through July 31, 2020.

The FY21 budget was $38.5M but has been cut to $35.4M. The new television contract between the Mountain West Conference and Fox/CBS Sports will help significantly by adding $2M per year to the budget. Student fee projections have been scaled back to a projection of $5M. Significant cuts to the FY21 budget will occur in ticket sales and corresponding gifts. Football attendance projections have been cut to 75-80%. USU is working with the University of Utah and Brigham Young University to be consistent in how football attendance will be handled this year with social distancing and protection of participants, coaches, staff, and fans. Basketball attendance was cut slightly with the hope that by the time the season begins social distancing regulations may be relaxed allowing greater attendance. The Mountain West Conference will implement cost-cutting measures to include the reduction in the number of games or contests played in all sports except football and basketball.

As of June 1, 75 football players have returned to Logan. These athletes were self-isolated for two weeks and were tested for COVID-19 last week. There were no positive test results; however, two of the athletes will return for more testing. Men’s and women’s basketball and volleyball athletes have returned to campus and were tested last week with results expected soon. The remaining teams’ athletes will return in July and August. All athletes will be tested upon their return to campus. A few of the issues the Mountain West Conference is trying to address include the frequency of testing athletes the week of a game, the handling of positive tests, and whether to isolate the roommate of an athlete who tests positive.

Today, one staff member tested positive. ARS Cleaning and Restoration is deep cleaning the facilities where that person has been. There will be vast changes to football this fall including no fans being allowed on the field during pre-game or at halftime. Halftime performances will be from the stands. The NCAA is mandating that coaches, student-athletes, and trainers be tested on a regular basis and be separated from fans as much as possible.

Athletics has organized a Diversity and Inclusion Council with a drafted charge to improve the cultural environment of Utah State Athletics, with a focus on diversity and inclusion, through education, understanding, discussion, and development of courses of action for current and future cultural issues in the athletics department,
at Utah State University, in the state of Utah, in the United States, and in society as a whole. This will be a collaborative effort driven by student athletes, coaches, and staff of USU Athletics, while drawing on the expertise and experience of others who are trained in these areas. USU Athletics has held open forums with student athletes, coaches, and staff where they have spoken freely about some of the issues and anxieties they have about attending USU and living in Logan. A significant amount of the diversity on campus comes from student athletes, coaches, and staff. This council will be populated with student athletes, coaches, staff, and campus community members.

B. Recent Events
1. Mountain West Board of Directors Executive Committee Conference Call – May 1, 2020
2. Council of Presidents by Video Conference – May 4, 2020
3. APLU COP Virtual Meeting: Case Studies and Q&A on Plans to Reopen Campus for Fall Semester – May 8, 2020
5. Regence Community Board Meeting by Video Conference – May 12, 2020
6. Regent Transfer Council by Video Conference – May 12, 2020
7. APLU COP Virtual Meeting: OTSP Meeting with University Presidents and Chancellors: Restarting and Reinvigorating the Research Enterprise – May 13, 2020
8. Board of Regents Virtual Meeting – May 15, 2020
9. Council of Presidents by Video Conference – May 18, 2020
10. USU Foundation Board Executive Committee Conference Call – May 19, 2020
11. APLU Webinar: Presidents + Meeting on Fall Housing, Dining & Instruction – May 19, 2020
12. Mountain West Board of Directors Executive Committee Video Conference – May 19, 2020
13. Mountain West Board of Directors Virtual Meeting – May 21, 2020
16. Council of President by Video Conference – June 1, 2020
17. Mountain West Board of Directors Virtual Meeting – June 1, 2020
18. Board of Trustees Executive Committee Conference Call – June 9, 2020
19. Economic Development Corporation Utah Board of Trustees Virtual Meeting – June 10, 2020
20. USU Foundation Board Executive Committee Meeting – June 11, 2020
21. USU Foundation Board Meeting – June 12, 2020
23. Presidents’ Alliance Steering Committee Conference Call – June 15, 2020
24. APLU Board of Directors Virtual Meeting – June 17, 2020
25. APLU Council of Presidents Summer Virtual Meeting – June 18, 2020
26. USU Board of Trustees – June 19, 2020

C. Upcoming Events
2. Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Board Meeting – June 24-26, 2020
IV. CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Burnett stated that the Trustees received the following agenda items for review.

A. Minutes from the Regular Meeting held on April 29, 2020

B. Minutes from the Closed Session held on April 29, 2020

C. Academic Proposals

   1. The School of Teacher Education and Leadership in the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services proposes adding Science Education as a specialization to the existing Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction. [Resolution 20-06-01] (Appendix C)

   2. The School of Teacher Education and Leadership in the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services proposes adding Science Education as a specialization in the existing Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction. [Resolution 20-06-02] (Appendix D)

   Action: Trustee John Ferry moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Trustee Kent Alder seconded the motion. The voting was unanimous in the affirmative.

V. ACTION AGENDA

A. Faculty and Staff Adjustments [Resolution 20-06-03] (Appendix E)

   1. Brady R. Cox to be Professor with tenure, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, College of Engineering; effective 01 August, 2020. B.S. Utah State University, 2000; M.S. Utah State University, 2001; Ph.D. University of Texas, Austin, 2006.

The Board of Trustees acknowledged that Lisa Berreau was appointed Vice President for Research and congratulated her on this appointment.

   Action: Trustee Kent Alder moved to accept the Faculty and Staff Adjustment. Trustee David Huntsman seconded the motion. The voting was unanimous in the affirmative.

VI. INFORMATION AGENDA
A. Report of Investments for December 2019 (Appendix F)
B. Report of Investments for January 2020 (Appendix G)
C. Report of Investments for February 2020 (Appendix H)
D. Department of Public Safety Annual Report (Appendix I)

Chair Burnett asked if there were any other items the Trustees would like to discuss before the meeting closed; none were mentioned.

Action: Trustee Terryl Warner made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Sami Ahmed seconded the motion; voting was unanimous in the affirmative.

The meeting adjourned at 12:31 p.m.

Jody K. Burnett, Chair

Sydney M. Peterson, Secretary
(Minutes taken by Teresa Denton)

August 14, 2020
Date Approved