

**LANDER UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

F. Mitchell Johnson Board Room  
Lander University  
Greenwood, South Carolina

Tuesday, September 15, 2020  
9:30 a.m.

**Presiding:** Linda Dolny

**Members of the Board in Attendance:**

**Via Video and Audio Call:**

Angela Strickland  
Anne Walker  
DeWitt Stone  
Don Lloyd  
Don Scott  
Robert Sabalis  
Holly Bracknell  
Jack Lawrence  
John Craig  
Marcia Hydrick  
Ray Hunt  
Robert Barber  
Peggy Makins

**Absent:**

Cathy Lee  
Cary Corbitt  
Maurice Holloway

**Others in Attendance:** President Richard Cosentino; Dr. Scott Jones, Provost and Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs; Adam Taylor, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Chief of Staff; Stacie Bowie, Vice President for Finance and Administration; Matt Braaten, Assistant Vice President for Planning Analytics and Decision Support; Megan Price, Assistant Vice President of University Relations and Publications.

**Attended Via Video and Audio Call:** Todd Gambill, Vice President for Enrollment and Access Management; Boyd Yarbrough, Vice President for Student Affairs; Crystal Rookard, Vice President and General Counsel; Mike Worley, Vice President for University Advancement; Brian Reese, Director of Athletics.

Board Chair Linda Dolny called the meeting to order and stated for the record that appropriate publicity in order to comply with the Freedom of Information Act had been disseminated and that this meeting is in compliance with that Act.

**Dates to Remember:**

Wednesday, September 23, 2020 – Board member elections

Saturday, December 12, 2020 – May 2020 graduating class commencement ceremony

Monday, December 14, 2020 – December board meeting

Tuesday, December 15, 2020 – December 2020 graduating class commencement ceremony

**I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Anne Walker motioned to approve the May 2020 board meeting minutes; seconded by Peggy Makins. The board meeting minutes from May 2020 were approved unanimously.

**II. PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

In the midst of the disruption from the Covid-19 pandemic, Lander University’s percentage increase in enrollment has grown more than that of every state-supported university combined. Lander grew 8.8%, and has beaten a 28-year record of retention set in 1992 by President Jackson. The retention rate record was 71% and is now 75%. Student’s lives were disrupted, yet more of them returned to Lander than ever before. Lander residence halls are full.

Lander worked with DHEC, CDC and other universities to develop a plan to manage the safe return of students. Lander’s plans appear to be working and the university has not experienced any significant positive Covid-19 numbers relative to our employees or our students.

President Cosentino applauded Lander employees for stepping up and quickly adapting to virtual instruction. While many employees were able to work remotely, facilities, university police, university relations, and IT staff, as well as other staff, remained on campus to ensure that the transition was safe and productive for others.

Studies have shown that the pandemic negatively impacted students’ mental health. Lander allowed students who were enrolled in the spring to continue to visit with Lander’s mental health professionals during the summer, regardless of their enrollment status in the summer or fall semesters. Between May 10th and August 10th, over 200 mental health visits were recorded.

Lander has launched eight new degree programs, added four new degree emphases, renamed a degree, and significantly revised several degree programs.

Lander added a Chick-Fil-A to our campus, expanded Starbucks, relocated Which Wich, redesigned the POD, and added a large number of tables and chairs to the Learning Center, commons, and the plaza to allow students to dine and study socially distanced. IT installed additional wireless connectivity across the campus to increase bandwidth so that students will have no trouble studying and attending virtual instruction across campus.

At this time, a furlough or reduction of university employees is not necessary. Many of South Carolina’s universities have taken steps such as furloughs and other cost-cutting measures. Dr. Cosentino informed the board that he does intend to submit a plan of this type to state State HR for its approval to have State HR fully vet and approve a plan prior to any action being taken by the Lander

board. It is possible that Lander could receive a budget cut and need to reconsider a furlough and other cost-cutting measures. Students could choose to withdraw over their disappointment in having many of their face-to-face classes moved on-line. Dr. Cosentino does intend to proceed with an early voluntary retirement and voluntary separation plan. Lander will not move forward with any involuntary employment cost savings initiative without the Lander Board of Trustees' review and approval.

Lander is facing a space deficit. Enrollment has grown an estimated 30% without the addition of instructional space. Dr. Cosentino proposed a plan to acquire a building in Greenwood and requested Chair Dolny to create an ad-hoc committee of board members. The building would be purchased by the Lander Foundation and leased by the university for 5-7 years and then be transferred to the state. The ad-hoc committee will tour the facility and review metrics, the appraisal, and state data. If the ad-hoc committee agrees that Lander should move forward with this acquisition, the full board will be notified. The final purchase decision will be made by the Lander Foundation board.

Lander University will soon announce commencement details for the classes graduating in May 2020 and December 2020. Covid-19 conditions could change our plans. Currently, Saturday, December 12, is reserved for the May 2020 graduating class and Tuesday, December 15, is reserved for the December 2020 graduating class. Ceremonies will be divided into a morning and afternoon program, with three college commencements being in the morning and three college commencements being in the afternoon. More details to follow.

Dr. Cosentino concluded his comments by relishing on Lander's success:

- The highest enrollment ever.
- The highest percentage increase in the state.
- Acceptable positive levels of COVID cases to manage.
- Record retention level of 75%.
- Students who are excited and, at this time, are largely behaving in a safe manner.
- Three brand new roofs, compliments of the State of South Carolina.
- And probably the only South Carolina university that will not furlough or lay off its employees.

### **III. BOARD CHAIR REPORT**

Chair Dolny reminded board members that Jack Lawrence will be considered for Board Chair Emeritus status in March 2021.

Chair Dolny thanked the Bylaws Committee members for their hard work. Board members received suggested bylaws changes via email in June. Bob Sabalis discussed the suggestions in detail and will continue to share changes each meeting with the final vote of approval in 2021.

Other higher education institutions are cutting temporary staff, encouraging retirements, and furloughing staff. Lander has worked hard to prevent the need to furlough employees.

Chair Dolny shared CHE Fall 2020 enrollment data for all South Carolina state-supported institutions. Only two institutions' undergraduate enrollment improved: Clemson and Lander University. Lander University graduate program enrollment increased by 45%. This is due to well thought out decisions over the last five years.

Adam Taylor reported that Lander is currently operating under a continuing resolution; he is hopeful that Lander's budget will not be cut.

Chair Dolny asked that the following be read in to the minutes; "All of us have the ability to consult an attorney regarding Lander issues. I would like you to know that I am considering doing that with questions I have concerning two individuals and actions they have taken in the past. Actions that I view as inappropriate. If you have any questions, please call me."

Chair Dolny announced the new partnership with the Greenwood Food Pantry to open a Food Pantry on campus.

#### **IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

##### **Academic Affairs: Robert Barber**

**1. Approval of Tenure – Dr. Mark Rollins**

Robert Barber motioned to approve tenure for Dr. Mark Rollins; seconded by Anne Walker. The motion passed unanimously and tenure was granted.

**2. New Program – Certificate, Genetic Health Studies**

**3. New Program – Graduate Certificate, All-Hazard Emergency Management**

**4. New Program – Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.)**

Robert Barber motioned to approve the three new academic programs; seconded by Don Lloyd. The motion passed unanimously.

**5. Request for Flexibility on Searches for Deans**

Anne Walker motioned to request flexibility on searches for new deans; seconded by John Craig. The motion passed unanimously.

##### **Enrollment and Access Management: Holly Bracknell**

No action items.

##### **Finance and Audit/Governmental Affairs: Don Lloyd**

**1. FY 2020-2021 Online Undergraduate Fee Proposal**

Don Lloyd motioned to approve the 2020-21 Online Undergraduate Fee Proposal; seconded by Don Scott. The motion passed unanimously.

**2. Authorization for President to Sign Exempt Leases**

Don Lloyd motioned to approve authorization for the president to sign exempt leases; seconded by John Craig. The motion passed unanimously.

**3. Authorization for President to Request Funding from the Lander Foundation for Certain Building Renovations**

Don Lloyd motioned to approve authorization for the president to request funding from the Lander Foundation for certain building renovations; seconded by Ray Hunt. The motion passed unanimously.

##### **Institutional Advancement: John Craig**

No action items.

##### **Student Affairs/Intercollegiate Athletics: Ray Hunt**

No action items.

##### **University Policies: Bob Sabalis**

**1. Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination and Non-Harassment Policy**

Bob Sabalis motioned to approve the policy with the possibility of a need to consider revisions

at a subsequent board meeting; seconded by Don Scott. The policy was approved unanimously.

**V. OTHER BUSINESS**

**Faculty Senate: Dr. Pedro Lopes**

Report was emailed to the Board.

**Staff Senate Report: Eddie Shaw**

Report was emailed to the Board

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

Robert Barber motioned to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Bob Sabalis. The motion passed unanimously.