

May 11, 2026

Dear Faculty, Staff, Students, Alumni, Trustees, and Friends of William Penn University,

After deep reflection and many meaningful conversations with my wife, Diane, I have informed the Board of Trustees that I will retire as President of William Penn University in the summer of 2027.

This decision was not made lightly. Serving William Penn University, my and Diane's alma mater, has been one of the greatest privileges of my life. Every step of this journey has been shaped by the people who make this institution extraordinary—our students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, donors, and community partners. Above all else, I feel profound gratitude.

I am grateful to our students, who bring energy, curiosity, resilience, and purpose to this campus every day. Watching you discover your voices, pursue your goals, and support one another has been a constant source of inspiration. William Penn is, first and foremost, a student-centered institution, and you are the reason this work has mattered to me.

I am deeply thankful to our faculty and staff. Your commitment, creativity, and care for students define the William Penn experience. You have navigated change, uncertainty, and challenge with professionalism and heart, consistently stepping forward for the good of this community. The strength of this institution rests squarely on your shoulders, and it has been an honor to work alongside you.

To the Board of Trustees, I offer my sincere appreciation for your stewardship, partnership, and trust. Your steady leadership and belief in William Penn's mission have provided essential guidance during times of growth and development. I am confident that you will lead the University thoughtfully through this transition and beyond.

I am equally grateful to our alumni, donors, and friends. Your generosity and advocacy have sustained William Penn and opened doors of opportunity for generations of students. Your continued engagement reflects the enduring bonds of this University family and ensures its future.

William Penn has always been more than a community—it is a family shaped by shared values of inclusion, opportunity, and respect for every individual. I have been continually grateful for the way students, employees, alumni, and community members have come together, especially during challenging periods, to support one another and move the institution forward.

As I approach this next chapter, I want to express special gratitude to Diane and my entire family. Diane strengthened me, enabled me to smile, and buoyed me for this work when I came home and wasn't sure that was possible. At times she did this with humor and counsel, but most often just with her presence and the calming atmosphere that she has created in my life. My family's support, patience, and encouragement have enabled me to serve fully in this role. They have shared this journey in both visible and behind-the-scenes ways, and I am profoundly thankful for the sacrifices they have made and the joy they bring to my life. It is time to give them more of my time and attention.

There is no perfect time for a leadership transition, but I believe renewal is essential for institutions to remain strong and responsive. I remain fully committed to my responsibilities during the year ahead and to supporting a thoughtful, smooth transition to new leadership. There is still important work for me to do in the coming year. William Penn University is well-positioned for the future, and I have great confidence in the people who will continue this important work.

In time, there will be space to reflect more fully on our years together. For now, please know how thankful I am for the experiences, relationships, and shared purpose that have defined my presidency. William Penn University will always hold a special place in my heart.

With sincere gratitude,



John E.E. Ottosson
President