

Committee: **University of Western Ontario Board of Governors**

Organization/Sector represented:

Name: **Blair Poetschke**

Occupation: **Business Owner**

Work experience: **25 years as an entrepreneur to start, grow and transition companies in London, focusing on manufacturing and selling products often developed in a university environment and being sold to other scientific researchers worldwide. Prior experience includes 5 years of management consulting with Ernst & Young, in the areas of economic feasibility, health, economic development and organizational planning. In between business start-ups I also served as the Director of Trade for the Province of Ontario.**

Education: **Masters in Business Administration and a B.A. in Economics (Western University).**

Skills: **Unique perspective on the application of Western's products (i.e. students & research) to the business and scientific worlds. This is based on many commercial and volunteer interactions with the University since 1994, as well as hiring many students from various programs as my employees, plus as a student from 1980 – 84. Business skills derived from successfully running multiple businesses will of course be an asset, focusing on objectives, resources and strategic directions. In addition, in all my companies, there has always been some focus on the “greater good” for society and not just bottom-line profits. Thus, I feel I can assist with balancing Western’s priorities between both broad and specific goals. Past involvement on the Boards of numerous economic organizations provides additional perspectives.**

Interest reason: **Western University plays a vital role in our City, not just in terms of economic spin-offs and training students for vital roles in local businesses, but also as an innovation engine. While innovation is strong at Western, more can be done to commercialize new inventions and grow these businesses here in London. Related to this, I believe that there is high potential to create the conditions for more graduating students to remain in London and help build our city for the future.**

Contributions: **I am able to balance the multiple objectives of the University's vision while adding a new focus of entrepreneurship, both within Western and within our City. Professors and students can be encouraged to do more with their innovations, for the overall economic benefit of both Western and the City. Other contributions include enhancing the image and involvement of the University in local, national and international business groups, looking for opportunities for University to advance its mandate based on extensive international travel related to education and research, and experience with good governance policies.**

Past contributions: **A six-year term as a Director of the London Economic Development Corporation included a focus on integration of economic support groups in the city as well chairing the Life Sciences subcommittee and being a member of the Audit Committee. During four years as a Director of the London Small Business Centre we re-evaluated the organization’s mandate and created a fundamental shift towards mentoring and virtual incubation of businesses. As a Founding Director of TechAlliance, we integrated four separate economic organizations into this one entity and developed the funding model to ensure its ongoing operation today. Other roles have included being an Advisory Board Member of the Centre for Global Exports, Chair of the Canada Ontario Export Forum, Director of the London Chamber of Commerce and also the first year of the London Biotech Incubator.**

Interpersonal: **Respecting/exchanging views with others has been a constant theme throughout my career. As a consultant, my role was to gather these views/facts and integrate them into a vision for presentation and discussion. As a business owner, my success has been driven by recognizing and respecting the talents of employees, and enabling those people to work on behalf of the organization. Involvement as Director and/or Chair on a wide variety of Boards required careful attention to the perspectives of others and the ability to discuss the essence of an issue/opportunity and its resolution. Other related experience comes from participation in the Southwest Ontario Angel Group and from my current role as Chair of the Global Business Opportunities Committee (GBOC) of the London Chamber. GBOC represents a group of people from a wide variety of both business and membership-based organizations who have come together to**

accelerate the international development of London businesses.

Interview interest: **Yes**