



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Academic and Student Affairs Committee

(As amended)

Minutes

September 27, 2016

Board of Trustees members in attendance: Committee Chair Slakey, Committee Vice Chair Martin (joined meeting at 10:08 AM), Committee Secretary Landrau. Also, committee members Trustees Sullivan (joined meeting at 10:12 AM), Hill, and Magovern.

Excused absences: Trustee Brandon Trafford.

Dr. Ramon S. Torrecilha, President of Westfield State University was also present.

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair Slakey at 10:01 AM.

Committee Chair Slakey moved forward to agenda item Approval of Minutes.

MOTION was made by Trustee Hill to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2016 meeting. This motion was seconded by Trustee Landrau. Trustees Slakey, Landrau, and Hill voted in favor of the approval of the minutes. Trustee Magovern abstained because he was appointed to the Board of Trustees on August 31, 2016 and was not present at the June 16, 2016 meeting.

Committee Chair Slakey requested that time be allowed on the agenda for general discussion.

Committee Chair Slakey moved to the draft charter for the committee. Although Trustees Johnson and Martin worked on this draft, she would prefer that the work begin at the committee level. Committee Chair Slakey asked committee members to think about the responsibilities of this committee and anything else that may come to mind.

Trustee Landrau emphasized the importance of trustee participation as well as a collaborative effort with the President and his leadership team.

Committee Chair Slakey said that the committee and all trustees need to charge themselves with learning what the trustees can do and what needs to be done.

Committee Vice Chair Martin entered the room at 10:08 AM.

Trustee Hill stated that the actions of the committee should ensure that there is always focus on the academic mission of the institution.

Trustee member Sullivan entered the room at 10:12 AM.

Trustee Magovern stated that for him, it is important that the committee continue down the right road and not develop a new plan just to do so.

Committee Chair Slakey invited Dr. Pickron and Dr. Marotta (Academic Affairs and Student Life) to comment as to what they would like to see on a charter for the committee.

Dr. Marotta presented themes/topics that could assist the committee. These are:

1. Trends in higher education and how these trends are being responded to.
2. Tenure and promotion.
3. Core education requirements.
4. Collective bargaining agreements and their impacts.
5. New academic programs.
6. The alignment of the business of this committee with university priorities.
7. Student centered learning.

Dr. Pickron said that a key piece is making a difference in the life of the students through opportunities for growth

Trustee Martin stated that at a broad and general level, the role of this committee is to ensure and promote the integrity and responsiveness of the academic and extracurricular programs of the college. Also, assessment is important

President Torrecilha recommended that the committee focus on outcomes first, then goals such as student success.

Committee Chair Slakey moved forward on the agenda to Items for Discussion, the Clery Report and gave Dr. Pickron the floor. Dr. Pickron introduced Chief Tony Casciano, Director of Westfield State University Public Safety. Chief Casciano gave a brief overview of the Clery Act as well as how reporting is conducted. Schools are required by the federal government to do this reporting. Chief Casciano handed out a brief outline from the WSU Department of Public Safety on the Clery Act and information from the Handbook for Campus Safety and Security Reporting. Chief Casciano further explained that parents can go on the federal website and research the safety of a school they and their son or daughter are considering. If the reporting is not done, schools will be fined.

Chief Casciano pointed out that there are four general categories of crime statistics: Criminal Offenses, Hate Crimes, Violence Against Women Act Offenses (VAWA), and Arrests and Referrals for Disciplinary Action.

Questions were asked about drug offenses, alcohol violations, sexual violence, and interactions with the Westfield police.

Chief Casciano responded that investigations are conducted by Public Safety. The state police are brought in if there is a bigger investigation. He said that if there is an incident, the city police would assist Public Safety, but with investigations, Public Safety works with the state police. He also informed the committee that a separate fire log is also required. He also reminded the group of the RAVE notification system, used if there is an incident for which Public Safety must immediately notify the community. Chief Casciano said that officers do go out and speak to the community; an example, active shooter training.

President Torrecilha emphasized that student safety is a priority.

Chief Casciano introduced Officer Foyle. Officer Foyle informed the committee that in Massachusetts, an officer must do a minimum of forty hours of sexual assault education before the officer can investigate such matters. He stressed the importance of the officers establishing relationships with the students well before any incidences occur.

Trustee Martin asked what percentage of victims chooses to take a complaint off campus as a criminal complaint. Officer Foyle responded that if someone came into their office and said that they didn't want to go criminal, the complaint would still be assigned to the District Attorney's office. Then, a victim's advocate is assigned; an independent third party reaches out.

Committee Chair Slakey said if there were no further comments or questions, she would move on to the next item on the agenda. Hearing none, she brought forward Academic Affairs Summer Updates and gave the floor to Dr. Marsha Marotta.

Dr. Marotta introduced:

- Dr. Cheryl Stanley, Dean of Academic Affairs
- Thomas Raffensperger, Director of Academic Affairs
- Dr. Lisa Plantefaber, Interim Dean of Research & Assessment
- Dr. Jennifer Hixon, Department Chair and Professor of Graduating and Continuing Education
- Dr. Shelley Tinkham, Interim Dean of Graduating and Continuing Education
- Dr. Sue LaMontagne, Dean of Student Affairs
- Ryan Meersman, Outreach and Marketing Coordinator, Graduate and Continuing Education
- Caterina Johnson, Institutional Research
- Chris Hirtle, Executive Director of Academic Technology Services

- Benson Stewart, Staff Assistant, Academic Technology Services.

Dr. Marotta explained that President Torrecilha asked that a list of goals be prepared over the summer, a difficult task with the change of two new deans.

The Westfield Experience: Dr. Marotta explained that she discussed this at the Trustees Retreat Follow Up meeting on September 9. She explained that this is a signature program that the President brought in with him and that as it moves forward, the program will undergo an assessment.

The Westfield Promise: Dr. Marotta explained that this is an early college, high school model partnership with high schools in Westfield, Springfield, and Holyoke. All partners make sure students participate and succeed. She said that the state made money available (through a grant) for this type of project. The university received the grant but later, the state decided not to fund the grant. However, the university decided to move forward on the project. Dr. Marotta continued that the university did receive a larger than usual award for the dual enrollment program and that the university was allowed to use some of this money to start the Westfield Promise program. In this program, Westfield faculty teach with the high school faculty. Courses are known as “stretch” courses. This introduces the student to college level work. This program is about reaching students who are under-represented at the university; to get them to think differently about college. Dr. Marotta informed the trustees that there is a pilot program this year at the Westfield Technical Academy. In the fall of 2017, the program will start in full with 75 students. These students will earn automatic admission to WSU if they meet the criteria to be admitted to the university.

This program differs from dual enrollment; dual enrollment courses are taught in high school but not necessarily to under-represented students; this program is targeted to that demographic.

Dr. Tinkham explained that in this early college program, there is a cohesive set of experiences for students identified in the junior year of high school year. “Stretch” courses are offered over the entire year. In the senior year of high school, students transition to campus. This is a mindful approach.

President Torrecilha added that students are advised by Academic Affairs and there is a mapping out of the four years before the student even enrolls here.

Dr. Marotta said that the program has a connection with students early on with the intention that the student will enroll at Westfield State University.

There were no further questions or comments on this item.

The next item brought forward was the NEASC Interim Report. She said that there is a ten year annual report that involves a self-study and site visit, but that a five year report coming up. There are four areas of special emphasis for the University:

1. Assuring its governance structure effectively facilitates the integration of strategic and academic planning.
2. Providing sufficient resources to support institutional planning and evaluation activities.
3. Continuing to develop and implement a comprehensive and systematic approach to the assessment of student learning and program review.
4. Developing and implementing a coherent and substantive common core curriculum.

A report will be available in October.

Mr. Raffensperger addressed the inclusive process and stated that Academic Affairs is making progress in all areas. He continued that the assessment is challenging, but stressed that this is “not just a mindset but a heart set change among faculty.”

Trustee Martin referred to the strategic plan and the plan being put off for a year. He asked if this will affect how the above will be done with regard to NEASC. President Torrecilha responded, no.

Board Chair Marcus entered the meeting at 11:08 as a trustee guest.

Further information about the advisory committees to the President was requested.

There was no further discussion on this agenda topic and the agenda moved forward to Education Licensure Programs. Dr. Marotta explained that there is a state review this fall and that 40 programs will be reviewed in ten academic departments. It is a three day process during which thirty student files will also be reviewed.

Dr. Marotta gave the floor to Dr. Stanley who issued a handout that listed programs that are under review. Dr. Stanley explained the handout stating that this is the second phase of the review process and this is the written aspect of it. The process prior to this was the needs assessment process. It must be demonstrated that a need exists for a program. Dr. Stanley said that the STEM program was particularly difficult. She stated that in STEM, there exists a shortage of teachers. Westfield State brought this to the attention of the Department of Higher Education and as well as deans throughout the Commonwealth and the Council of Presidents. It was explained that this is a common shortage area and to prove the need to keep such programs seemed unnecessary. Now, there is no longer a need to issue a needs assessment on this program.

Committee Chair Slakey asked how students can be drawn into these programs (such as STEM).

Dr. Stanley responded that a recruitment plan is being developed. Dr. Tinkham came up with a teacher’s incentive to increase enrollment in these programs. There is a partnership with Springfield in recruiting students of color. Also, working with Admissions and Marketing on how to recruit into these areas of low enrollment.

Dr. Marotta noted that across the country, the education major is down in part due to how much money it will cost to go to college and what is earned as a teacher. She said that

education has higher standards than other majors; it is dictated by the state and accrediting agencies.

Trustee Hill pointed out that in Connecticut teacher salaries start at \$50,000 per year. He stressed the importance of greater and more accurate information being given.

Dr. Marotta that Massachusetts is at least \$10,000 behind Connecticut in teacher starting pay.

Dr. Stanley said she would agree with the terms of messaging citing reach to teach; to change this message and talk as a profession and its career path.

The agenda moved forward to the Occupational Therapy Program.

Dr. Marotta explained that there is a search for a Director of the program and the process being followed is similar to the one followed for the Physician's Assistant program. Accreditation is required and the process is moving forward. It is the hope that the PA program will open in January 2018 followed by the Occupational Therapy program.

President Torrecilha said that there are conversations with the Department of Higher Education about changing the requirements of the profession. Doctoral training in occupational therapy and physician's assistant programs is being looked at. However, a graduate program must be in place first.

Committee Chair Slakey asked if there was any more discussion or questions. Hearing none, the agenda item Draft Westfield State University Fact Book was brought forward.

Dr. Marotta explained that the Fact Book discussion will lead into the demonstration of the Student Success Dashboard. She said that the Dashboard is a great example of the kind of data that is available and in one place.

Dr. Marotta introduced Dr. Plantefaber for the Dashboard demonstration. The purpose of the Dashboard is to spread information to stakeholders and those working on student success.

Trustee Hill left the room at 11:27 AM and returned at 11:34 AM.

Dr. Plantefaber explained that the Dashboard can take broad data, use processes in order to look at what exists and develop associations. She then proceeded with a live demonstration of the Dashboard, drawing committee members' attention to the information available such as enrollment and demographics. Information provided by the Dashboard includes diversity in the student population and students in each major. Information that is available from the Dashboard includes completion of degrees, type of degree by major, race, and ethnicity. She noted that the percent of degrees to white students is going down while the percent to students of color is going up. The Board of Higher Education wants achievement gaps closed and the Dashboard is showing that slowly, the gaps are being closed for equal success rates. In this database there is an enrollment record for every student who started at this institution as a first year student.

Trustee Queenin entered the room at 11:51 as a trustee guest.

The conversation turned to students leaving Westfield State University and efforts being made to connect with these students. Dr. Plantefaber explained that by using the Dashboard, the user can see problems coming up early on. She further explained that it is difficult to get people who have left to respond to inquiries although a survey is issued to which about 50 percent of students respond. She also stated that the National Student Clearinghouse is also used to track information on the students leaving school. Dr. Plantefaber further explained that according to the National Student Clearinghouse about 10-15 percent of these students go on to another college and graduate.

President Torrecilha stated that this information reveals that for one segment of students, Westfield State University wasn't their first choice. For another segment, maybe the university didn't have the major desired by the student; for another, maybe the student didn't feel a part of the institution.

Trustee Landrau left the room at 12:01 PM and returned at 12:04 PM.

Trustee Johnson entered the meeting room at 12:05 PM as a trustee guest.

Dr. Plantefaber said that what she would like to work into the Dashboard the Westfield State 360 which allows instructors to target students at risk.

Committee Chair Slakey stated that this is a work in process and that the committee looks forward to hearing more about this and perhaps find more time to fit it into the discussion on a regular basis.

Committee Chair Slakey asked if there was any further discussion or questions. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Trustee Martin made the motion to adjourn the meeting with a second by Trustee Hill. It was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 12:07 PM.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

1. Clery Report (Annual Security Report for 2014)
2. Westfield State University Department of Public Safety, Clery Act Outline
3. The Annual Security Report: Publishing Policy Statements and Crime Statistics, Samples of Reporting Tables
4. Westfield State University Crime Log, dated September 2016
5. Draft Westfield State University Fact Book
6. NEASC Review, Worksheet of Programs Under Review