Board of Trustees members in attendance: Chair Steven Marcus and Trustee members Terrell Hill, James Hagan, Robert Magovern, Robert Martin, Kevin Queenin, Edward Sullivan, and Cameron Swan.

Excused absences: Vice Chair Linda Slakey, Secretary Madeline Landrau and Trustee Lydia Martinez-Alvarez.

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

The Board of Trustees entered executive session at 2:01 PM.

Chair Marcus requested President Torrecilha; Stephen Taksar, Vice President of Administration and Finance; Dr. Diane Prusank, Chief of Staff; and Jean Beal to remain in the room.

Chair Marcus thanked all the trustees for coming to this important meeting and thanked President Torrecilha for taking on another significant issue with swiftness and great leadership and for sacrificing his time and travel plans.

President Torrecilha stated that the response to the bias incidents had been a team effort and that he was proud of the faculty, staff and students in their response to the situation. A banner has been placed on the university website to share information as the campus becomes aware of incidents. There were 13 bias incidents in September, 3 in October, and 5 in November. Students of color are frustrated and angry over safety concerns and they want to see the institution responding right away. It has been a learning process for the students as they learned that there is a process involved in considering cameras, following state regulations and going through procurement. A university Bias Incident Response Team (BIRT) has been established where professionals can come together to provide information and resources to students that have been subjected to the incidents. The President has been communicating with the campus community regularly and has been very transparent with the issues. There has also been some discussion of educating students on some of the unintended consequences of putting information on social media.

The Emergency Operations Center was in operation on more than one occasion. A telephone bank was set up for people to call if they had questions. A monetary award of $2,500, which was increased to $5,000, was offered for information leading to a prosecution, which was approved by legal counsel. A hotline was implemented for any information on the incidents. University-wide forums were held for
faculty, staff and students. President Torrecilha met with students, the student government association, the bias team, and other groups. Workshops in the residence halls were started, beginning in Davis Hall. The Division of Academic Affairs established the Higher Ed, Higher Ground lecture series and are discussing how diversity requirements in the common core can be changed. Some students find it difficult to wrap their minds around class subject matter with these incidents occurring. Although faculty have been invited and encouraged to hold discussions about the incidents in class, some are reluctant to do so and they can’t be made to participate. The administration wants to provide more opportunities for faculty and staff in learning how to approach these situations.

Trustee Sullivan entered the meeting at 2:12 PM.

Public safety has been increased and the state police have been very helpful. The university has also reached out to the city of Westfield, hiring some of their officers to fill in on a part-time basis. Increased hours in the counseling center have also been added.

President Torrecilha continued that Westfield State is the most residential campus in the public system and has 12 cameras in the parking lots. Some of our sister institutions with lower residential populations already have cameras installed. The camera proposal provided is to install over 400 cameras in and around the residence halls by a company that has been vetted through the RFP process. Safety trumps privacy and we need to make sure we have a safe environment. The cameras won’t solve the problems, but we need to put technology to work for us. A security camera policy is being drafted and will be presented at the December 7 meeting. The recommendation from Minuteman Security Technologies is that cameras be installed in just the residential buildings, not the academic buildings at this time.

A discussion continued on where the cameras would be placed, which will be the common areas in the residential halls, such as the elevators, hallways, and doors. Most cameras will be positioned at end of the hallways, to show the whole hallway and not angled to view inside the dorm rooms. It was added that the view also needs to capture the face of a person, not just the feet and body, as that would defeat the purpose. Decisions regarding adding cameras to academic buildings or other areas can be done at a later date and such a system would integrate with the one being proposed.

President Torrecilha asked for flexibility on how to pay for the camera installation. There are some reserves from Massachusetts State College Building Authority (MSCBA), and some funds could be taken from that. Other funds can come from the contingency and an expected overage.

It was questioned what the campus community thought of the installation of cameras. The consistent message from the majority of students, parents and faculty is that they want the cameras purchased and installed. Dr. Prusank stated that the new policy will define public space versus private space and that there is a balance between the two that has been incorporated into the policy. Other institutions’ policies have been reviewed to see how they have balanced privacy versus safety.

The new policy will note that the cameras will not be monitored 24/7, but will be reviewed once an incident occurs. The cameras can be monitored if needed by campus police but there will be no extra personnel costs incurred. The cost of providing 24/7 security for the past five weeks was significant.

The camera footage will be kept for 45 days unless there is an open investigation. In that case, the footage will be kept until the investigation is complete. The location of the cameras will be visible in all
locations, either by the actual camera mounted to the wall or a dome covering the camera. There will be two servers supporting the cameras so in the case of a power outage, the footage will roll over to the second server.

Trustee Hagan entered the meeting at 2:27 PM.

Although the contract quotes $807,475, there will be additional expenses for network switches, electrical, and maintenance, bringing the total to over $1 million. The students will not be charged a fee for the cost of the cameras; the funds will be taken from the contingency and overages.

President Torrecilha gave an update on the continuing investigations and cooperative efforts of campus and state police departments. He stated that a log has been created giving brief descriptions of all the incidents which will be on the Bias Incident Response Team website.

It was stated that with over 4,000 students, it doesn’t take too many to create this atmosphere on campus. The Trustees were appreciative that the communication surrounding the incidents has been fast and complete. It was discussed that although the response needs to be public, there is a fine line as we don’t want to give the responsible parties the publicity they want from their actions.

President Torrecilha also stated that there is work to do as there are community voices that think we are spending too much time and resources on this matter and that it is just kids being kids. Some are questioning whether the incidents actually happened. He continued that safety is the university’s number one priority and that will be taken very seriously.

President Torrecilha addressed the clean-up fee at Davis Hall. The university policy states that when a student rents a room, they sign a contract, and if they create damage to the unit or common areas, they are responsible. After the 35 incidents were done, the maintainers had to come in and clean up at overtime costs. The cleaning fee came to $1.79 per student, which was waived.

Trustee Swan suggested that these bias issues are everywhere, on many campuses. As part of his involvement with a student trustee group, they have discussed how to address this issue as student leaders.

**MOTION** made by Trustee Queenin, seconded by Trustee Martin, to authorize the purchase and installation of a video/camera system as proposed in the Minuteman Security Technologies Residence Hall Camera Design Budget – VE Complete, Quote No. 6551 dated November 22, 2017 for $807,475. Contract exclusions and unknown conditions may add $140,000 to $200,000 to the equipment/installation quote.

Source of funding to be excess fee revenue, residence hall reserves, Massachusetts State College Building Authority (MSCBA) funds and/or a combination of all the above.

This motion authorizes the President to proceed with the procurement and installation of the camera/video system as proposed as soon as possible.
2:55 PM, ROLL CALL VOTE was taken:
Trustee Marcus    yes
Trustee Hill      yes
Trustee Hagan     yes
Trustee Magovern  yes
Trustee Martin    yes
Trustee Queenin   yes
Trustee Sullivan  yes
Trustee Swan      yes
Motion passed unanimously.

President Torrecilha stated that he has kept the governor and the commissioner fully informed of the situation and thanked the Trustees for their support and input in the entire matter.

The Trustees agreed that it is important to send a message that the President and the administration has the full support of the Board and that they have also given full support of the purchase and installation of the cameras by unanimous vote.

MOTION made by Trustee Swan, seconded by Trustee Hill, to move out of executive session.

2:59 PM, ROLL CALL VOTE was taken:
Trustee Marcus    yes
Trustee Hill      yes
Trustee Hagan     yes
Trustee Magovern  yes
Trustee Martin    yes
Trustee Queenin   yes
Trustee Sullivan  yes
Trustee Swan      yes
Motion passed unanimously.

The executive session adjourned at 2:59 PM.

Attachments:
  a. Minuteman Security Technologies Residence Hall Camera Design Budget – VE Complete, Quote No. 6551
  b. Motion - Purchase and installation of video/camera system
  c. Draft Security Camera Authorization and Use Policy