



Board of Trustees

Special Meeting

April 15, 2020

Minutes

Meeting held virtually via Zoom

In accordance with Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker's Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, § 20 dated March 12, 2020.

A live stream of the meeting for public viewing also took place on YouTube

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING REMOTELY: Board Chair Kevin Queenin, Vice Chair Edward Sullivan, Secretary Lydia Martinez-Alvarez and Trustees Paul Boudreau, James Hagan (joined at 3:59 PM), Madeline Landrau, Robert Magovern, Dr. Robert Martin, and Thalita Neves

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Trustees Melissa Alvarado and Dr. Gloria Williams

Dr. Roy H. Saigo and Mr. Kevin Matthews, Vice President of The Registry, were also participating remotely.

The meeting was called to order at 3:31 PM by Chair Queenin, who stated the meeting would be held entirely by Zoom and be live streamed on YouTube. He welcomed Dr. Roy Saigo and thanked him for his interest in applying for the position of interim president of Westfield State University. Chair Queenin also introduced Mr. Kevin Matthews, Vice President of The Registry, who assisted in bringing a number of candidates to the Board.

Dr. Saigo provided his professional background and experience and stated that after teaching and doing research, he decided to go into administration after publishing his first paper. He shared the following:

- Dr. Saigo has focused on diversity everywhere he has been. His practice was to visit and meet the principals of the schools surrounding the university, many of which served minority communities. Enrollment soared. You have to put into place a system with activity and support to make the students feel welcome once they get to campus.
- In the first 90 days as an interim, he would invite the entire campus to hear him speak and try to meet with every department, although the types of meetings may need to be modified due to the COVID-19 restrictions.
- He feels he can contribute to Westfield State's success due to his accomplishments in assisting universities facing similar situations with budget issues, retrenchment, lawsuits, grievances, and votes of no confidence.
- Fundraising is a huge priority for universities due to declining enrollment. His experience has been working with university foundation leadership to renovate and expand their membership and increase the base of donors. Donors need to trust the president and his/her leadership and the plan for the institution.

- Interaction with students is important. At Southern Oregon University, he helped to coin the phrase to “treat every student as if they were your own” so that every member of the faculty and staff would do the best they could to make each student successful.
- Everyone talks about recruiting, but if you do not keep the students, your numbers will not increase. Focus on creating connect points for the students - when they come onto campus, when they declare a major, when they are having trouble. Use the Westfield Promise to connect one year to the next, ensuring they are connected year-to-year and remain at Westfield.
- You must make sure, even with your body language, that you are creating trust. Trust and respect are the hardest to receive and you have to show and tell the truth to gain them. Shared governance is needed to work together to solve issues. The positive of COVID-19 is that it is requiring everyone to collaborate.
- In order to receive buy-in for programs, you need to listen to concerns. There will not always be agreement, but it is important to understand the issues with kindness and respect, listening carefully.
- The Strategic Plan and the two new Centers will move the institution forward together to support hybrid and online learning due to COVID-19. Contingencies such as online classes only, then hybrid classes, then regular face-to-face classes have to be considered. The Coronavirus will not be going away soon, so in the future of Westfield State there will have to be all three types of learning. When students enroll, intensify the Westfield Promise to keep them connected and successful.
- As he has looked at the graphs from 2000, 2007, and the model for 2020, the year following a recession showed a greater deficit than in the year it happened. Financial challenges will be much greater for 2021. He can bring great energy and dedication to a public institution. Public education, especially regional schools, is an avenue for citizens to move up the economic ladder. If we do not have quality affordable education, we do not have democracy and a successful middle class.
- Success for Westfield State is to buy into and work the Strategic Plan. The only thing holding the campus back is spending too much time with a toxic environment. Focus on the issue of working together and moving Westfield State another bar or two.

Chair Queenin stated that those viewing on YouTube who want to provide input from the interview should send feedback to Jean Beal by this Friday. It will then be sent to the Trustees.

There being no further business, **MOTION** made by Trustee Landrau, seconded by Trustee Sullivan, to adjourn.

ROLL CALL VOTE taken:

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| Trustee Boudreau | Yes | Trustee Martinez-Alvarez | Yes |
| Trustee Hagan | Yes | Trustee Neves | Yes |
| Trustee Landrau | Yes | Trustee Queenin | Yes |
| Trustee Magovern | Yes | Trustee Sullivan | Yes |
| Trustee Martin | Yes | | |

Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 4:26 PM.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

- a. Resume of Dr. Roy H. Saigo