



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

April 30, 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:** Chair Kevin Queenin, Vice Chair Edward Sullivan, Secretary Lydia Martinez-Alvarez and Trustees Melissa Alvarado, Paul Boudreau, James Hagan, Madeline Landrau, Robert Magovern, Dr. Robert Martin, Thalita Neves and Dr. Gloria Williams

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

The meeting was called to order at 1:52 PM by Chair Queenin, who welcomed Mr. Matt Noyes, Director of Trustee Relations at the Department of Higher Education (DHE) and all others watching live on YouTube.

**MOTION** made by Trustee Magovern, seconded by Trustee Martinez-Alvarez, to approve the minutes of the February 6, 2020 Board of Trustees meeting.

**ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

General Announcements: Chair Queenin stated we are living in challenging times and it is clear that Westfield State and the entire state university system has some difficult decisions to make in the near future. On behalf of the entire Board, he thanked the faculty, staff, and administration for their dedication and commitment to University; it is truly appreciated. He thanked the students for their patience and cooperation. Although it is impossible to predict the new normal going forward, the faculty, staff, administration, and Board are committed to putting student success at Westfield State University at the forefront.

Student Trustee’s Report: Trustee Neves thanked all the professors and students who have made the online learning process happen. It has been an extremely anxious and challenging time for students mentally and financially. She is pleased that commencement will take place on October 24 and thanked everyone who is

making decisions. Students are worried about internships. If the fall semester is virtual, it will cause some students to take a gap year. She expressed appreciation that the Center for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (CURCA) celebration, honors projects, classes, Ely Library, and the counseling and career centers are all online. The Student Government Association (SGA) Executive Board has come together to help provide input on the Pass/Fail Policy and advocate for refunds and awards at year end. The SGA will be holding elections in the fall and she will run again for the student trustee position. She will be the SGA co-president with Sam Tsongalis, the current president for the Class of 2021. When tough decisions concerning the budget need to be made, Trustee Neves requested that everyone ask themselves at what cost those decisions will affect the students.

President's Report: President Torrecilha thanked the entire campus community for adapting so quickly to the challenges presented by COVID-19. The faculty are real heroes in delivering their curriculum. He thanked the staff for their willingness to support faculty and students and thanked the students for their grit and efforts.

- The long-term impact on public Higher Education presented by this pandemic remains uncertain. Tax collections for the Commonwealth will be \$4 billion to \$6 billion below FY21 projections and unemployment levels won't bounce back until 2022. The state appropriation will be reduced by at least 5% with the possibility of up to 20%. Some other states are cutting public Higher Education funding by 25% to 30%.
- The CARES Act funds will be split. The first half of \$2.2 million will go to students. The second half of \$2.2 million to \$2.4 million will be for institutional support. Congressman Richard Neal met with the Council of Presidents (COP) to discuss federal relief, and there may be a Phase 4 funding to cities and towns and a Phase 5 funding to infrastructure, healthcare and possibly education. Senate President Spilka recently gave sobering remarks and invited presidents and chancellors to reimagine what public Higher Education will look like in the future.
- There are discussions with the Massachusetts State College Building Authority (MSCBA) to refinance for spring 2020 and for FY21. If successful in refinancing, that will provide relief.
- Very shortly a task force will be established to plan for a safe opening and return to campus. The following three scenarios are anticipated for fall. Traditional on-ground, delayed traditional opening, and a hybrid model with both on-ground and online classes. Try to imagine social distancing on move-in day, in residential halls, dining commons, and sports events. Would we need to test, track and quarantine students? Communication has been initiated with Baystate Medical Center.
- President Torrecilha stated that he appreciated faculty and staff who took the time to provide him with input on a successful Provost appointment. It was hoped to do a national search in the fall. The faculty union voted not to participate. He reached out to the colleges to meet for their input and a meeting did not take place. He is very proud to announce that Dr. Robert Kersting has agreed to serve as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. He has been with Westfield State almost 25 years and has made valuable contributions to the institution.
- Dr. Kersting thanked President Torrecilha for the appointment and said he was looking forward to working with the faculty, staff, students and the Board at Westfield State. With the realities of COVID-19 putting the institution in uncharted waters, there is a need to be flexible and creative and to collaborate and listen to students. Although very important to return to campus in the fall, safety and social distancing will be extremely essential. Dr. Kersting looks forward to guiding the campus through continued development and implementation of the Strategic Plan and next accreditation. Dr. Kersting believes one of his best leadership traits is the ability to listen and spend time talking with people to understand and come to a consensus on how to move forward.

Academic and Student Affairs Committee: Trustee Martin read a proclamation recognizing Ms. Carly Thibodeau, the 29 *Who Shine* award recipient. During its meeting, the committee discussed the transition

to online learning, retention, and had a presentation on commuter students. The Provost’s recommendations for tenure and promotion were also reviewed and approved. Dr. Diane Prusank, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, then referenced the eligibility and process criteria and presented to the full Board the candidates for automatic promotion, who were invited to join the meeting on YouTube. The Trustees viewed photos of each candidate as they were presented.

**MOTION** made by Trustee Martin, seconded by Trustee Magovern, to approve the granting of tenure with automatic promotion, effective September 1, 2020, to:

Dr. Leonardo Andrade	Psychology
Dr. Maria del Mar Farina	Social Work
Dr. Christopher Gullen	Communication
Dr. Phillip Hart	Economics and Management
Dr. Jesse Johnson	Mathematics
Dr. Erica Morin	History
Dr. Dristi Neog	Geography, Planning, and Sustainability
Dr. Mark Nimkoff	Communication
Dr. Kimberly Sherman	Economics and Management
Dr. Shirley Wong	English

To approve the granting of tenure, effective September 1, 2020, to:

Dr. Karen Sladyk	Health Science
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**ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Provost Prusank presented each of the candidates for promotion. Trustee Martin thanked all who were involved in the careful process, taking the time to get to know the people they were writing about. He reminded Trustees that they were voting on the leaders for the next 10-to-20 years which will establish the character of the University.

**MOTION** made by Trustee Martin, seconded by Trustee Magovern, to approve the granting of promotion to the rank of Professor, effective September 1, 2020, to:

Dr. Gabriel Aquino	Sociology
Dr. Mary Brown Bonacci	Music
Dr. David Christensen	Biology
Dr. Brian Conz	Geography, Planning, and Sustainability
Dr. Rachel Gibson	Music
Dr. Hugh Jo	Political Science
Dr. Megan Kennedy	Education
Dr. Rebecca Morris	Economics and Management
Dr. Aaron Reyes	Chemical and Physical Science
Dr. Brian Rizzo	Criminal Justice
Dr. Makoto (Max) Saito	Communication
Dr. Catherine Savini	English

Dr. Karen Sladyk  
Dr. Rosemary Sullivan

Health Sciences  
Social Work

To approve the granting of promotion to the rank of Associate Professor, effective September 1, 2020, to:

Dr. Tracy McLeod  
Dr. Miriam Tager

Education  
Education

**ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Audit Committee: Trustee Boudreau stated the committee discussed a recommendation to defer the search for an associate director for risk management to a later date due to the University's freeze on hiring, its current financial position, and lack of a qualified applicant. The auditors participated in the committee meeting and they will evaluate our internal procedures related to wire transfers and vendor management as part of their current work on the audit this year. The committee voted to engage the audit firm used in the past for next year's audit. Their engagement letter is similar to previous letters, and audit fees will go up 3% next year pursuant to the pre-negotiated fees in the contract.

**MOTION** made by Trustee Queenin, seconded by Trustee Sullivan, to engage the accounting firm of O'Connor and Drew, P.C. for FY20 audit services.

**ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Advancement and Enrollment Management Committee: Trustee Martinez-Alvarez stated the committee discussed funnel reports for day and CGCE enrollment as well as enrollment projections. There has been a slight change to the financial aid model and how funds are distributed to students. The admission schedule has changed to have all virtual meetings and events. There was a presentation from Marts & Lundy on planning for a strategic campaign. Information was distributed on the Public Higher Education Endowment Program, an incentive to receive a \$1 match from the state for every \$2 raised from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2021. The Institutional Advancement Dashboard was shared and the *Owls Helping Owls* campaign has raised almost \$20,000.

Finance and Capital Assets Committee: Trustee Sullivan stated the committee held an extensive review and discussion of the University's finances for FY20 and budget scenarios for FY21. Everything is changing so rapidly, which is a challenge for creating a sound budget for FY21.

Representatives from the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) and the architectural firm of Miller Dyer Spears (MDS), provided an update on the Parenzo Hall renovation.

- The conceptual design is finished and the project is now moving into the more detailed schematic design.
- The scope has been brought back so that it now aligns to the resources. A budget summary from July 2019 to March 2020 was shared. Institutional Advancement will fundraise for \$200,000 to replace the seating in Dever Auditorium.
- There are regular biweekly meetings between DCAMM, MDS and the Parenzo Working Group. There are three other groups working on the project, which are the Student Success, Academic, and CoLab working groups. The lists of group participants was shown.
- The project goals were shared of renovating Parenzo Hall to renew functionality and maximize its use, and expanding and deepening programmatic collaboration with the Center for Student Success, CoLab, academic department updates and flexible classrooms.
- Plans for the renovation of Parenzo and Scanlon Halls were shared.
- The project schedule was shown with a projected move into the renovated Parenzo Hall during the summer of 2023.

Other Business - Interim President Discussion: Chair Queenin stated that he had contacted The Registry, a search firm in Massachusetts who specializes in interim appointments. Twelve qualified candidates for interim president were presented, which was then reduced to six. He and Trustee Martin interviewed those six candidates, finalizing the two candidates. Discussion on the two finalists, Dr. Roy Saigo and Dr. Jane Milley, followed.

- The candidates were provided links to documents on the University website to review, and they both have a good sense of what is going on locally and nationally in regard to COVID-19. They also have a very clear understanding of the campus environment, spending, and budget issues.
- Both candidates are clearly qualified and very experienced. Dr. Saigo stood out given his past leadership experience in dealing with similar challenges as Westfield State in issues of diversity, budgets, fundraising, no confidence votes and the need for healing.
- Dr. Saigo's approach is very personal and direct, with the ability to listen to, interact with, and be accepted by faculty, students, staff of all levels, administrators, and alumni.
- Dr. Saigo researched Westfield State's faculty, enrollment, programs and understood the significance of Horace Mann's vision.
- Moving across the country to live in the surrounding area demonstrates a commitment Dr. Saigo is willing to make. Alternatively, coming from out of state, he may be unfamiliar with our state, the system, and the area, which is important at a state institution.
- There were approximately eight emails with feedback received from the campus community who viewed the interviews on YouTube. There was one in favor of Dr. Milley and the rest were for Dr. Saigo.

Chair Queenin shared that the next steps are a motion to appoint the interim president, then approval from the Department of Higher Education, and then negotiations.

**MOTION** made by Trustee Martin, seconded by Trustee Martinez-Alvarez, to appoint Roy Saigo, Ph.D. as Interim President of Westfield State University, effective date to be determined, and to serve in that capacity until the search is complete and a new President has been identified and appointed; and to confer upon and delegate to the Interim President, the powers and authority of the Office of the President, subject to the approval of the Department of Higher Education.

**ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

**MOTION** made by Trustee Martin, seconded by Trustee Alvarado, to authorize and direct the Chairman of the Board of Trustees to negotiate compensation and benefits for the Interim President, Roy Saigo, Ph.D.; and to authorize the Chairman to execute, ratify, approve and confirm all actions, commitments, negotiated compensation and benefits made to Roy Saigo, Ph.D. by the Chairman acting for and on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

**ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Chair Queenin will reach out to Dr. Milley to thank her for her involvement and participation.

Permanent President Search Committee Discussion: Chair Queenin stated that in early April, the Executive Committee met to discuss the permanent president search committee and organizing the committee will start soon. Trustee Martinez-Alvarez shared that she would like to volunteer to be on that committee.

Trustee Sullivan left the meeting at 3:54 PM.

Chair Queenin stated that the pandemic has defined a new normal and that for far too long we have been a divided campus. We all need to come together and put aside differences. Starting today, he asked that everyone commit to moving Westfield State forward together, focusing on what needs to be accomplished in spite of economic challenges, creating long-term success for the students and the University.

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

**ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

Trustee Alvarado	Yes	Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes
Trustee Boudreau	Yes	Trustee Neves	Yes
Trustee Hagan	Yes	Trustee Queenin	Yes
Trustee Landrau	Yes	Trustee Sullivan	Disconnected.
Trustee Magovern	Yes	Trustee Williams	Yes
Trustee Martin	Yes		

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 3:58 PM.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

- a. Minutes of February 6, 2020

**Academic and Student Affairs Committee:**

- b. 29 Who Shine Proclamation
- c. Tenure and Promotion Criteria
- d. Motion – Tenure
- e. Tenure Recommendations and Justifications
- f. Motion – Promotion
- g. Promotion Recommendations and Justifications

**Audit Committee:**

- h. Motion – FY20 Audit Firm Selection
- i. O'Connor & Drew Engagement Letter

**Finance and Capital Assets Committee:**

- j. Parenzo Hall Renovation Update Presentation

**Other Business:**

- k. Motion – Appointment of Interim President
- l. Motion – Authorization to Negotiate Compensation