



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Academic and Student Affairs Committee

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:** Committee Chair Martin, Vice Chair Martinez-Alvarez, Secretary Magovern, Trustees Neves, Sullivan and Williams

**TRUSTEE GUESTS PARTICIPATING REMOTELY:** Trustees Alvarado, Landrau, and Queenin

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

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 AM by Trustee Martin, who stated there would be two action items and updates on remote learning and student engagement.

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

**ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

Trustee Magovern	Abstained	Trustee Neves	Yes
Trustee Martin	Yes	Trustee Sullivan	not audible
Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes	Trustee Williams	Yes

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Motions for Tenure and Promotion: Dr. Diane Prusank, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, referred Trustees to the summary of the purpose, eligibility criteria and evaluation process for tenure and promotion. The evaluation process spans the full academic year and involves many individuals, including the department chairs, faculty on the personnel committee, deans, and staff in the office of Academic Affairs. Provost Prusank presented each candidate for tenure in an abbreviated form with a fuller description of all candidates’ qualifications to be given at the full board meeting.

**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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Discussion: Trustee Martin stated this is the first year that all the college deans were able to participate in the evaluations for their faculty, which is a critical part of the process, giving the deans a better understanding of their colleges. They are also engaged with mentoring and working with chairs on faculty development.

**ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

Trustee Magovern	Yes	Trustee Neves	Yes
Trustee Martin	Yes	Trustee Sullivan	Yes
Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes	Trustee Williams	Yes

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Provost Prusank presented the candidates for promotion, giving brief descriptions of qualifications.

**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	Health Sciences
Dr. Rosemary Sullivan	Social Work

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

Dr. Tracy McLeod	Education
Dr. Miriam Tager	Education

Discussion: At Trustee Martin’s request, Provost Prusank spoke to the mentoring and support that faculty receive in the period leading up to the significant tenure and promotion process. She stated that annual contract renewal evaluations promote mentoring throughout the entire process by engagement with the department chair as they observe classes and have briefings, and by bringing peers together for observations. A year-long series of meetings with first-year faculty has been created and second- and third-year faculty have been invited to meet with each other and other individuals. These meetings help new faculty understand the programs available and bolsters the mentoring process.

**ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

Trustee Magovern	Yes	Trustee Neves	Yes
Trustee Martin	Yes	Trustee Sullivan	Not audible. Disconnected 8:54AM
Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes	Trustee Williams	Yes

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Remote Learning and Student Engagement amid COVID-19. Provost Prusank gave an update on remote learning and expressed appreciation for the entire campus adapting.

- Operational Adjustments have been made by the Center for Instructional Technology, Media Services, Academic Technology Services, and Academic Information Services. All of these departments worked tirelessly to move the campus online by supporting Blackboard and Zoom, distributing laptops and Wi-Fi, and handling support calls.
- Faculty rose to the challenge of the adjustments needed to take in-person classes to online learning. There is thoughtful and encouraging work taking place in each department.
- There has been continued support and continuity to students through remote tutoring, the Center for Reading and Writing, the Banacos Academic Center, and STEM tutoring.
- Virtual academic events are still taking place such as a lecture by Dr. Craig Hendrix, an Earth Day Zoom Session and the Celebration for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity (CURCA) happening remotely tomorrow. Trustee Sullivan reconnected to the meeting at 9:09 AM.

Dr. Gloria Lopez, Vice President for Student Affairs, shared strategies being used for new opportunities to engage students and help them feel connected to campus life while living off campus. She expressed appreciation for the innovative ways the entire Student Affairs team continued to involve students.

- Communication for high levels of support as students transitioned to remote learning included emails, phone calls, social media, webpage updates, Student Affairs blog, and Zoom meetings.
- Highlights were shared of how each of the following departments were connecting with students: Student Activities and Clubs, SGA Executive Council, Career Center, Counseling Services, Residential Engagement, Public Safety, and Athletics.

It was questioned whether any adjustments were being made to grading due to classes changing from in-person to virtual. Provost Prusank answered that the University governance system had put forth a proposal to expand the provisions of the Pass/Fail Policy to create a temporary change for the spring semester to include expanded courses and to extend the deadline to select pass or fail. Students can see their final grade before selecting the pass/fail option. The only courses excluded are courses that are submitted for licensure and accreditation. A copy of the revisions will be sent to the Trustees.

Commuter Student Experience. Ms. Shannon Broderick, Director of Student Conduct, was introduced and spoke to the differences in the populations of resident and commuter students as it relates to retention efforts, sharing the following data points.

- Most upperclassmen are commuter students.

- Graduation and retention rates for first time-full time, housing status, and Pell eligible students was shown. The gap in retention between residential and commuter students is decreasing.
- Virtual and on-campus engagement opportunities for commuter students were presented.
- Results of a commuter survey from the winter of 2020 were shared, with 640 commuter students participating. Based on their feedback, we now have to work to enhance their experience to support retention efforts and connect them to the University, as 79% of commuters do not attend campus events.
- FY21 programming and engagement (both virtual and on-campus) ideas were shared.

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

**ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

Trustee Magovern	Yes	Trustee Neves	Yes
Trustee Martin	Yes	Trustee Sullivan	Not audible. Disconnected.
Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes	Trustee Williams	Yes

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:52 AM.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

- a. Minutes of February 6, 2020
- b. Tenure and Promotion Criteria
- c. Motion: Tenure
- d. Tenure- Recommendations & Justifications
- e. Motion: Promotion
- f. Promotion- Recommendations & Justifications
- g. Remote Learning Student Engagement Presentation
- h. Student Engagement Spring 2020 Presentation
- i. Commuter Students Matter Presentation