Board of Trustees

Governance and Nomination Committee
June 11, 2025, 8:00 a.m.
Minutes

Conference Rooms A & B, University Hall

A live stream of the meeting for public viewing will also take place at the following link: https://www.westfield.ma.edu/live

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MEMBERS PRESENT: Committee Chair Melissa Alvarado, Secretary Tessa Lucey, and Trustees- Chris Montemayor, Michael O'Rourke, William Reichelt and Board Chair Ali Salehi, ex-officio member

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING REMOTELY: Vice Chair Theresa Jasmin

Also present were Westfield State University President, Dr. Linda Thompson.

Committee Chair Alvarado called the meeting to order at 8:01 AM and a roll call was taken of the committee members participating as listed above. It was announced that the meeting was being livestreamed and recorded.

> **MOTION** made by Trustee Lucey, seconded by Trustee O'Rourke, to approve the minutes of the April 22, 2025 meeting.
>
> There being no discussion, and a roll call vote, **motion passed.**

General Updates

- Congratulations to Student Trustee Daniel Currier and the entire Class of 2025.
- Replacing Trustee Currier will be Barney Garcia, a political science major with a concentration in Public Administration.

2025 - 2026 Officer Nomination Election Results

- The board voted to keep the current officers in place to close out the third term.
  - Trustee Salehi will continue as Chair.
  - Trustee Alvarado will continue as Vice chair.
  - Trustee Williams will continue as Secretary.
- Succession planning for next year is needed.
  - Those interested in any of the positions should reach out to Chair Salehi, Vice Chair Alvarado or Brittney Kraus.

Summer Board Retreat

- The summer board retreat will take place on Friday, August 8th.
- The agenda includes:

    - Committee structure and overall board governance.
        - Realign the committee structure with the strategic priorities.
        - Chair Salehi will work on committee assignments after the retreat based on the new structure.
    - Board self-evaluation.
- Dr. Thompson will have someone speak about AI and its effect on higher education and society.

Self-Evaluation Summary

- 100% participation.
- The board's self-evaluation looks at eight key areas of board governance:
    - Board operations
    - Board /president relations
    - Advocating for the university
    - Institutional performance
    - Standards for university performance
    - Community relations
    - Policy direction
    - Policy rule
- Overall the board agreed or strongly agreed with the majority of these areas.
- There were quite a few "don't knows" that were selected.

<u>Board Legal Responsibilities</u>

- The board adheres to its legal responsibilities, code of ethics, and standards of practice.
- There is a high level of respect among board members, accommodating different opinions.
- The board maintains confidentiality of privileged information.
- The board is willing to take a stand for what it believes is right for students and the community.

<u>Board /President Relations</u>

- The board provides a high level of support to the President.
- The board maintains open lines of communication.
- The board effectively evaluates the President annually.
- The board clearly delegates the administration of the university to the President.

<u>Board Advocacy</u>

- The board recognizes the positive accomplishments of the University.
- Board members should be knowledgeable about state and national educational policy issues.
- The board should understand and protect the academic freedom of faculty and lecturers.

<u>Policy Direction</u>

- The board should focus on policy and strategy, not administrative matters.
- The policy-making process should be clear, public, and inclusive.

<u>Areas of Improvement</u>

- The board needs to discuss the future direction of the university.
- There are contradictory opinions on whether the board clearly delegates administration to the president.
- The survey was anonymous, and every comment made on every subject matter is in the report.
- The report will be shared with all board members after the meeting.

Major Accomplishments for the Year

- Continuing to support the president as she builds up the cabinet.
- Growth of the board through onboarding of new trustees and relationships with external stakeholders.
- The fiscal year 2025 budget was realistic and adhered to.
- Board members are engaged, informed, collaborative, and respectful.

Board Representation and Engagement

- The board positively represents the university on campus, in government, and in the community.
- Strong engagement and contribution to the development of the new strategic plan.
- Data was introduced in presentations more regularly.
- Open positions were filled, resulting in a full and engaged board.

Financial Oversight

- The board has shown strong financial stewardship by approving operating budgets, reviewing student fees, and overseeing critical construction and renovation projects.
- These actions have contributed to the university's financial stability and long-term sustainability.
- Attendance at the AGB National Conference was highlighted.

There being no further business,

MOTION made by Trustee Reichelt, seconded by Trustee O'Rourke, to adjourn.
ROLL CALL VOTE passed motion unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 AM.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

a. Draft Minutes of April 22, 2025, Meeting
b. Board self-evaluation

Secretary's Certificate

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the approved minutes of the Westfield State University Board of Trustees Governance and Nomination Committee meeting held on June 11, 2025.

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Tessa Lucey, Secretary Date