



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes

December 17, 2020

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, Robert Magovern, Dr. Robert Martin, Thalita Neves, Ali Salehi, and Dr. Gloria Williams

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Trustee Landrau

Dr. Roy Saigo, Interim President of Westfield State University, was also participating remotely.

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 PM by Chair Queenin and a roll call identified the members participating remotely as listed above.

MOTION made by Trustee Boudreau, seconded by Trustee Neves, to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2020 Board of Trustees meeting.

There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

Trustee Alvarado - Yes	Trustee Martinez-Alvarez - Yes	Trustee Salehi - Yes
Trustee Boudreau - Yes	Trustee Neves - Yes	Trustee Sullivan - Inaudible
Trustee Magovern - Yes	Trustee Queenin - Yes	Trustee Williams - Yes
Trustee Martin - Yes		

Motion passed.

General Announcements: Chair Queenin welcomed new Trustee, Mr. Ali Salehi, to the Board and stated that Trustee Salehi is very active in the community and has been a large supporter of the University through the years.

President's Report: President Saigo shared the following items:

- He is proud to see the billboards and the election-style campaign lawn signs.
- Open office hour conversations led to re-implementing the Student Ambassadors program.
- The diverse University Efficiency Analysis Advisory Committee (UEAAC) is finding cost savings and creating trust through collaboration.
- An employee recognition program is being planned.
- Westfield State is seeking designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), with a criteria of

enrolling twenty-five percent Hispanic students (we are currently hosting thirteen percent). A cabinet-level diversity and inclusion position is also being discussed. Trustees Williams and Martinez-Alvarez added insight to this topic. At a future meeting, efforts on diversity and inclusion will be discussed.

- Dialogue continues with all surrounding community colleges in building relationships to help lower the hurdles for students to transfer.

Presidential Search Committee Update: Trustee Martin, chair of the committee, stated that the Commissioner of Higher Education approved the Presidential Leadership Profile. The campus community is positive and working together. The committee has performed the following tasks:

- Established a Search Guide, a set of ground rules;
- Hosted listening sessions and reviewed survey results from the community, identifying University challenges, opportunities, and the qualifications and qualities sought in the next president; and
- Created the Presidential Leadership Profile for candidates to learn about the University. The Profile will be on the presidential search webpage within a week.

An open town hall will be held early next semester to give an update on the search process. The position is being advertised in twelve different publications for the next 30 to 60 days. The deadline for full consideration of applications is February 12. Semifinalists will be interviewed by mid-March and finalists will come to campus for interviews in late March/early April.

Student Trustee Report: Trustee Neves volunteered to join Trustees Williams and Martinez-Alvarez on an effort to develop diversity. She informed the Board that today marks 149 days until commencement. Students have worked very hard this semester with online learning, multiple moves, and new financial and family life challenges, creating increased stress and anxiety. They have managed to get through this year with new apps, campaigns, creativity, and innovation provided by the University. It is invigorating to see these changes taking place. It is important to remember to think smarter, not harder, as shown by UEAAC, and when answers are not clear, ask students what they think. They are living the experience of both the benefits and consequences of the decisions being made.

Safe Opening Update: Mr. Richard Lenfest, Jr., Director of Athletics and Chair of the Safe Opening Task Force, gave an update on the spring 2021 semester. Best practices are being followed and curtailment planning continues, with increased communication to the campus community. The academic calendar has been modified to start remote classes January 25 through 29, with in-person classes starting February 1. There will not be a spring break, but a mental health day has been added for students on March 10. Housing plans are being modified to allow fewer students on campus, approximately 826, with a required meal plan in order to decrease the need to travel off campus for groceries. All residential and commuter students on campus will be tested every week, with the option for on-campus faculty and staff to also be tested.

Trustee Sullivan disconnected at 2:24 PM and reconnected at 2:27 PM.

Advancement and Enrollment Management Committee: Trustee Martinez-Alvarez stated their committee meeting earlier in the day contained discussion on the lawn sign initiative, and she urged Trustees to obtain and display theirs. There are twenty additional companies providing internships to assist our students. Enrollments are down and virtual events for prospective and interested students is continuing. The largest donation to the University of \$3.5-to-\$4 million by the late Paul Dower was announced.

Moving to the next agenda item, Dr. Erica Broman, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, gave brief highlights of the individuals being presented for Staff Emerita status, noting that each were outstanding in their fields with over a century of combined experience.

MOTION made by Trustee Martinez-Alvarez, seconded by Trustee Boudreau, to approve the granting of staff emerita status, effective December 17, 2020 to the following individuals:

Sue Krieg
Pat Berube
Amy Szlachetka
Katherine Tansey

There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Queenin stated he and Trustee Alvarado met with Foundation and Alumni leadership and will continue to meet and work together with them.

Academic and Student Affairs Committee: Trustee Martin stated their committee meeting received information on the protocols and safety nets available to help students in crisis. The committee agenda item for an academic dean panel discussion on the induction of new faculty was postponed to the January meeting. He then welcome Dr. Jason Ramsay, Biology professor, who gave an engaging presentation entitled "Undergraduate Research in Functional Morphology: Combining Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics."

Dr. Robert Kersting, Vice President for Academic Affairs, presented the following names of professors being nominated for Faculty Emeritus/a status and highlighted each nominee's achievements.

MOTION made by Trustee Martin, seconded by Trustee Martinez-Alvarez, to approve the granting of Faculty Emeritus/a status, effective December 17, 2020 to the following individuals:

Dr. Laura Baker, Department of Education
Dr. William Cook, Department of Criminal Justice
Dr. Jane Mildred, Department of Social Work
Dr. Cheryl Stanley, Department of Education

There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Finance and Capital Assets Committee: Trustee Sullivan stated that at the committee meeting, they discussed the first quarter financials and budget planning scenarios. The debt report was postponed to another meeting. He then invited UEAAC to give an update.

University Efficiency Analysis Advisory Committee (UEAAC). Dr. Juline Mills, chair, and members of the committee presented the following update.

- Their charge was to assess the financial challenges and operational structure of the institution, finding pathways to reduce the structural deficit.
- An overview of the data bank website, which hosts all the committee material, was given.
- The data analysis summary findings were shared on costs per student and how funds are being spent.
- Trustee Martinez-Alvarez left the meeting at 3:25PM.
- Cost savings and thematic recommendations were given, some of which include reorganizing the academic structure, developing curriculum innovation, increasing diversity, strengthening the operating structure, improving communication, allocating resources, developing fiscal planning through collaboration, and examining functional realignment across divisions.
- Through data-informed decision making, cost savings and efficiencies were identified across the institution with an estimated savings of \$4-to-\$10 million. The goal is to put students first, and then take care of those who care for students.
- President Saigo left the meeting from 3:30 to 3:54 PM.
- Having a structural foundation helps when crisis occurs. By developing the foundation now, employees and their talents can be utilized where most needed.
- Trustees' appreciation was given for the transparent reporting on every aspect of the campus, stating that with 30 percent less students and 30 percent more staff, unifying and merging divisions is a good start. The information being provided is imperative in making tough decisions.

Trustee Sullivan brought forth the following motion, approved in the committee meeting.

MOTION made by Trustee Sullivan, seconded by Trustee Magovern, to authorize the University to participate in the development of a Department of [Higher] Education faculty separation plan for Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA) union employees. If such a plan is successfully negotiated between the Department of [Higher] Education, who is the employer of record, and MSCA, the University will seek formal approval from the Board to participate in the approved plan.

Discussion: It was suggested to add the word "Higher" before Education in the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE taken to approve the Motion as amended in the discussion:

Trustee Alvarado - Yes	Trustee Martinez-Alvarez—Left meeting	Trustee Salehi - Yes
Trustee Boudreau - Yes	Trustee Neves - Yes	Trustee Sullivan - Yes
Trustee Magovern - Yes	Trustee Queenin - Yes	Trustee Williams - Yes
Trustee Martin - Yes		

Motion passed unanimously.

Governance and Nomination Committee: Trustee Alvarado stated that at the committee meeting trustee training, policy review, and a board self-assessment model was discussed. An amendment to the bylaws is being presented in order to fill vacancies in the executive committee.

MOTION made by Trustee Alvarado, seconded by Trustee Sullivan, to approve amending Article V, Section 4, Paragraph A, of Westfield State University's Board of Trustees Bylaws by adding a sentence to that paragraph as follows:

Current language:

Section 4. Executive Committee

- A. *Membership.* The executive committee shall consist of the board chair, the most recent past board chair, the board vice chair, and the board secretary. The chair of the board shall chair this committee. The executive committee shall convene when called by the chair, by any two members of the committee or, by the president and any single member of the committee.

Proposed language:

Section 4. Executive Committee

- A. *Membership.* The executive committee shall consist of the board chair, the most recent past board chair, the board vice chair, and the board secretary. The chair of the board shall chair this committee. The executive committee shall convene when called by the chair, by any two members of the committee or, by the president and any single member of the committee. **In the event of a permanent or temporary vacancy of the board vice chair, secretary, or past board chair, the chair of the board of trustees, in consultation with the executive committee and president, shall appoint a replacement from among the other voting members of the board to fill that position until a replacement is elected to office or becomes available.**

There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

Trustee Alvarado - Yes	Trustee Martinez-Alvarez—Left meeting	Trustee Salehi - Yes
Trustee Boudreau - Yes	Trustee Neves - Yes	Trustee Sullivan - Yes
Trustee Magovern - Yes	Trustee Queenin - Yes	Trustee Williams - Yes
Trustee Martin - Yes		

Motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting will be January 21, 2021 at 1:00 PM.

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

There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

Trustee Alvarado - Yes	Trustee Martinez-Alvarez—Left meeting	Trustee Salehi - Yes
Trustee Boudreau - Yes	Trustee Neves - Yes	Trustee Sullivan - Yes
Trustee Magovern - Yes	Trustee Queenin - Yes	Trustee Williams - Yes
Trustee Martin - Yes		

Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 4:09 PM.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

- a. Minutes of November 17, 2020

Advancement and Enrollment Management Committee:

- a. Motion – Staff Emerita
b. Staff Emerita Justifications

Academic and Student Affairs Committee:

- c. Undergraduate Research Presentation
d. Motion – Faculty Emeritus/a
e. Faculty Emeritus/a Justifications

Finance and Capital Assets Committee:

- f. University Efficiency Analysis Advisory Committee (UEAAC) Presentation

- g. Motion – Bargain with MSCA for Early Faculty Separation Plan
- Governance and Nomination Committee:
- h. Motion – Bylaw Amendment (Executive Committee)
 - i. Proposed Bylaw Amendment