



BOARD OF TRUSTEES Minutes

November 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 and Dr. Gloria Williams

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Trustees James Hagan and Madeline Landrau

Dr. Roy Saigo, Interim President of Westfield State University, and Members of the Westfield Chapter American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) union were also participating remotely.

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 PM by Chair Queenin, who announced the following members were participating in the meeting remotely: Boudreau, Magovern, Martin, Martinez-Alvarez, Neves, Williams, and Queenin. (Trustees Alvarado and Sullivan joined the meeting after the President’s Report.)

MOTION made by Trustee Martin seconded by Trustee Boudreau, to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2020 Board of Trustees meeting.

There being no discussion, ROLL CALL VOTE taken:

Trustee Alvarado	Not yet joined	Trustee Neves	Yes
Trustee Boudreau	Yes	Trustee Sullivan	Not yet joined
Trustee Magovern	Yes	Trustee Queenin	Yes
Trustee Martin	Yes	Trustee Williams	Yes
Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes		

Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Queenin stated announcements would be given at the end of the meeting.

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

- All Westfield State billboards are up and lawn signs continue to be sold
- Looking into advertising on Hispanic and African American radio stations in Springfield
- The University Efficiency Analysis Advisory Committee (UEAAC) is gathering data and becoming like a family to each other

- Shout out to the entire COVID-19 team, who are working 15 to 16 hours per day above and beyond the call of duty and it is very stressful. Cabinet has been volunteering to carry dinners to students in Lansdowne and the dorms.
- There are plans to create a campus-wide committee to work on obtaining federal Hispanic designation. The Hispanic population will increase by 39 percent from 2020 to 2025.
 - Issues minority families are exposed to include not feeling respected in the workplace and having to conform to the executive presence of white males.
 - Springfield Technical and Holyoke Community Colleges are recognized as 25 percent Latinx institutions. Westfield State has an 11 percent Latinx population and needs to find out why more of those students are not coming here and why they are leaving if they do. We need to recruit, retain and graduate these students.
 - The committee will return in a few weeks with answers and recommendations.
 - Need the guidance, support, and encouragement of Trustees in obtaining this federally recognized status.

Trustees Alvarado and Sullivan joined the meeting at 3:03 and 3:05 PM, respectively.

Mandatory DHE Trustee Training: A grid with the training dates will be emailed to Trustees to sign up for specific dates. Trustee Alvarado will assist with this as part of Governance and Nomination Committee.

Safe Fall Opening/COVID-19 Update: Mr. Richard Lenfest, Jr., Director of Athletics and Chair of the Safe Opening Task Force, thanked all on campus who have worked quickly with an eye toward safety. He gave the following update on the spring semester, stating surveillance testing will benefit the entire community in having a good, strong semester.

- There will be 29,000 tests administered over a 15-week period from January through May, twice per week, which is a significant increase over the fall semester. Westfield State will be a leader among the state universities in testing next semester.
- There will be six testing groups for residential students, faculty, and staff weekly and commuters biweekly, at a cost of \$725,000, which has been requested from reserves.
- Orders are being placed now for spring personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies since the supply chain has been disrupted. For next semester, \$1.5 million will be incurred for additional PPE, testing, and testing support costs.
- It was suggested to check with the Governor's office on becoming a *Stop the Spread* testing partner, which is based on a formula. This will be followed up on.
- Students not getting tested face the consequence of getting their student ID turned off, giving them no access to their residence hall, meal plan, and gym.
- We are working with the Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative on contract tracing. All positive cases were notified and instructed to quarantine and isolate. All close contacts were contacted as well.
- The main thing learned this semester to help going into the spring semester is the amount of testing performed. A huge investment is being made in testing to help alert us in a more timely fashion if there is an outbreak.

University Efficiency Analysis Advisory Committee (UEAAC) Update: Dr. Juline Mills, Dean of the College of Education, Health and Human Services, and chair of UEAAC, was joined by Rebecca Brody, Dr. Joe Camilleri, Lisa Ducharme and Maria Feuerstein of the committee, who shared the following update.

- The committee started on August 28, 2020 and assigned a timeline for Phases I through IV.
- There will be a Town Hall meeting on December 11, and recommendations given to the president on December 18.

- The three committee subgroups of Phase II shared their work:
 - Subgroup I – Survey and focus group
 - Used both open-ended and closed questions
 - Analyzed responses for each question to look for themes and ideas
 - 428 employees participated; nearly half of all full-time employees
 - Subgroup II – Higher Ed Landscape/Institutional Structure Comparison Data
 - A full Westfield State Organizational Structure Chart was created
 - Subgroup III – Institutional Data Review from FY19 in revenue, expenses, enrollment, and instructional activity
 - There is a mountain of information to be transformed to support data-informed decisions and analyze the relationship between enrollment and financial structure, using resources to support campus activities. By hitting a reset button, we are shaping campus culture and taking a collaborative approach.
 - Models need to be developed that will help guide toward goals for the future to develop organizational flexibility.
- The committee’s goals are to establish benchmarks, develop models, create a factual and data-informed framework to support important decisions and ensure resources are aligned appropriately, and creating a pathway to continually invest in ourselves.
- Models will be created from FY19 data on all funds, then every fiscal year evaluated to be used in making projections, continuing in perpetuity to operationalize how to make informed decisions.
- There are multiple data points as the campus needs to see different viewpoints so they can see that recommendations are coming from a collective look of a variety of items. The process is data informed instead of data driven, using multiple integrated views of information based on multiple aspects of the data.

Budget Update: Mr. Stephen Taksar, Vice President for Finance and Administration, gave an update on FY21 and FY22.

Fiscal Year 2021:

- The FY21 key benchmarks have already occurred. Spent \$1.8 million in preparing campus for safe opening (testing, PPE, temporary staff, equipment, cleaning supplies, plexiglass).
- UEAAC identified \$6.4 million in one-time savings, which was hardwired into the general ledger system, and \$1 million in reserves was approved to close the budget gap.
- It is now believed that the state will keep our appropriation flat, which will reduce the original projected loss of \$3 million from the state appropriation when we had assumed a 10 percent cut. This would result in \$1 million of lower expenses (due to reduced benefit expenses), resulting in a total overall positive impact of \$4 million better than planned.
- Currently, the campus is now projecting \$5 million in additional costs to be funded by \$4 million in savings with a net gap of \$1 million. Spring testing will cost \$1.5 million, refunds for Dining and Residential Life will cost \$2.6 million, plus \$1.6 to \$2.4 in additional costs, and \$1 million in increased costs for instruction and Residential Life hires, for a cost impact of \$5 million funded by the state appropriation and lower benefit cost. This does not take into account any unplanned events in the spring.

Fiscal Year 2022:

- Working in scenarios using the parameters discussed as a baseline for presenting scenarios.
- Trying to hold the line on tuition and general fee increases.
- There will be other models on tuition and enrollment, and the state appropriation, occupancy rates, and enrollment are the largest drivers of the models.
- Strategies are being developed on the structure of pricing and costs in Residential Life and Dining.

- The UEACC recommendations will play into the final budget planning for the spring and fall of 2021, which will need to be implemented into the budget plan.
- It was mentioned that if students feel the spring semester will be all online, they may not return to campus, leaving the residence halls vacant. Trustee Neves stated this was a real possibility as students were frustrated with last-minute decisions being made and relayed to students on very short notice, giving the impression of uncertainty, which raises anxiety.

Trustee Sullivan left the meeting at 4:24 PM.

Presidential Search Committee Update: Trustee Martin gave an informational update on the presidential search, stating the fifth committee meeting would be held tomorrow to discuss the committee process and draft presidential profile, which is a description of the University, its challenges, and the desired leadership qualifications and qualities being sought. He highlighted some of the themes reflected in the survey and WittKieffer listening sessions. The next steps in the search are approving the leadership profile and sharing it with the Commissioner of Higher Education, the Board of Trustees, and the campus community, then start advertising the position.

Spring Semester Update: Dr. Robert Kersting, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, shared the current plan for spring classes being a combination of fully on-ground, hybrid, remote classes, and totally online courses. The current schedule is 30 percent online, 46 percent remote synchronous, 12 percent hybrid, and 11 percent fully face-to-face classes. The academic calendar will remain the same with classes starting on January 19 with a one-week spring break.

Motion – Resolution in Support of Funding for Public Higher Education: Chair Queenin stated that he and President Saigo had met with the other state university presidents and board chairs to discuss creating a resolution to support funding for Higher Education.

MOTION made by Trustee Queenin, seconded by Trustee Boudreau, to approve the Resolution in Support of Level-Funding for Public Higher Education as presented.

There being no discussion, ROLL CALL VOTE taken:

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Westfield Chapter American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Chief Stewards Presentation: AFSCME Chief Stewards Ron’na Lytle (Unit 1) and Luis Gonzalez (Unit 2) introduced themselves and presented information on their units. Ms. Lytle stated the unions make Higher Ed happen in Massachusetts. Their units have 221 members and include administrative assistants, clerks, police and security officers, accountants, maintainers, trades and grounds and Dining Commons staff. They are a highly-educated and skilled workforce who love Westfield State and its students. For many, they are the first and last people the students see when on campus and they listen, counsel and advise when needed. The maintainers, police, and trades and grounds staff have been on campus throughout the pandemic keeping it beautiful, clean and safe. Administrative staff have been doing a delicate dance working from home and on campus to make sure students, faculty and staff have everything they need while also taking care of their own families. They are tired and worried about the future, doing more with less, as many departments are short staffed, and thanked and asked the Board for continued support and guidance. Mr. Gonzalez stated his unit makes the campus what it is, and he pats his people on the back every day as they

go above and beyond, and he needs to make sure his people are being taking care of. Half of his staff have been on campus over 20 years, working hard to make the University what it is. They are not seen, but everything they do is. They are frightened because of the pandemic and worry about furloughs and layoffs. This meeting gives them hope that people can stay where they are and can get help in the future. Chair Queenin thanked them for giving a very good overview of who their units are, what they do, and how and why they do it. Dialogue will continue as we navigate through the next few months.

Chair Queenin closed by requesting Trustees to watch for increased campus information coming by email, to purchase lawn signs and send photos of them to Mr. Daniel Forster, Vice President for Enrollment Management.

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

There being no discussion, ROLL CALL VOTE taken:

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 4:47 PM.

Attachments:

- a) Draft Minutes of meeting October 13, 2020
- b) DHE Trustee Training Schedule
- c) UEAAC November 17, 2020 Update Presentation
- d) Motion - Resolution in Support of Funding for Public Higher Education
- e) Resolution in Support of Funding for Public Higher Education