



BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Presidential Search Committee

December 2, 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: Dr. Robert Martin, Chair, Melissa Alvarado, Vice Chair, Dr. Claudia Ciano-Boyce, Junior Delgado, George Flevotomos, Dr. Brian Jennings, Ron'na J'Q Lytle (joined at 4:37 PM), Lydia Martinez-Alvarez, Dr. Juline Mills, Thalita Neves, Ali Salehi, Thomas Simard, Stephen Taksar, Dr. Gloria Williams, and Dr. Jalisa Williams

Also participating remotely from the presidential search firm WittKieffer were Lucy Leske, senior partner, Robert Luke, consultant, and Christine Pendleton, senior associate.

Trustee Robert Martin, chair of the committee, called the meeting to order at 4:33 PM and announced all committee members participating remotely as listed above, with the exception of Ron’na Lytle, who joined the meeting at 4:37 PM. The goal of the meeting is to approve the Leadership Profile, advertisement and advertising plan, with a discussion on the timeline and Search Guide. (Ms. Lytle joined the meeting at this time.)

MOTION made by Dr. Gloria Williams, seconded by Dr. Brian Jennings, to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2020 Presidential Search Committee meeting.

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

Melissa Alvarado	Yes	Lydia Martinez-Alvarez	Yes
Dr. Claudia Ciano-Boyce	Yes	Dr. Juline Mills	Yes
Junior Delgado	Yes	Thalita Neves	Yes
George Flevotomos	Yes	Ali Salehi	Yes
Dr. Brian Jennings	Yes	Thomas Simard	Yes
Ron'na J'Q Lytle	Yes	Stephen Taksar	Yes
Dr. Robert Martin	Not Voting	Dr. Gloria Williams	Yes

Motion passed.

Trustee Martin announced that Ali Salehi, a member of the Search Committee, had been appointed to the University’s Board of Trustees. Mr. Salehi was added to the committee as a community representative and will now also be a Trustee. Trustee Martin reiterated his recommendation that all

votes come from a collaborative decision and reflect consensus of the committee. In order to finish the discussion of the Leadership Profile at this meeting, the following will be added to the agenda for discussion at the next meeting:

- Proposal to have a three-fourths affirmative vote to move candidates forward. With Trustee Martin continuing his decision not to vote, three-fourths of 13 members, rounded up to the nearest whole number, would be 10.
- If a committee member does not vote because they did not attend the interview, would the result be 75 percent of those eligible to vote instead of 75 percent of the entire committee?
- Whether the committee will vote for individuals or a slate of candidates to move forward.

Presidential Leadership Profile. Trustee Martin shared that the Profile represents the University very well and thanked all who worked on creating it. He explained some changes that had been made in the Profile, including, but not limited to, the following:

- More clarity on wording in the Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities section. The text on the level of education for a candidate is the wording from the Board of Higher Education (BHE) Guidelines, which was acceptable to the committee.
- WittKieffer shared what the Leadership Profile is and how it will be used:
 - Internally, it is the governing document of the Search Committee, helping them understand what is being looked for in the next president. It is the most important tool to demonstrate to the campus community that the committee has been listening to them.
 - Externally, it is used to recruit candidates. It is informative and helps candidates understand who you are and where you are going.

Some requested changes to the Profile from committee members included:

- Add the proximity to New York City at the end of the document and add the percentage of people of color in the region. Remove the downtown temporary housing sentence.
- Revise the Residence Life section to more accurately reflect that we are more residential than the other state Universities, including the percentage of residential students, which plays an important role in the strategic process.
- Add a few sentences to the Point of Pride section on what makes Westfield unique and why someone would want to come here to join us. We have a body of dedicated people that love this institution, are deeply devoted to making it better through many years of service, and committed to student success regardless of what department they are in.
- The new president needs to be student centered and show a level of care and love for the community itself, being excited about students, and not just focusing on the problems to be fixed. A human interaction component.
- The Profile is very clear we are looking for a particular kind of leader with emotional intelligence who can build teams and feel like a part of a collaborative enterprise. Additional wording could be added in the Opportunities and Expectations section that includes the commitment of faculty and staff for student success, stepping up and outside of their assigned roles.
- The first thing said could be that Westfield State wants a president who loves us and will become one of us. We need to capture the camaraderie and ask them to join our community of scholars, staff, and individuals who work well and are committed to the institution and each other.
- WittKieffer stated they were encouraged by the progress. In September, the message they heard was, "These are our problems." The message has changed to "We are great – come join us."
- In the Opportunities section, incorporate community pride and student success.
- Make the Role of the President more robust, adding students sooner in the paragraph and embed the concept of a "champion for students" throughout the document, supporting those who support the students.

The advertisement will be a combination of the Executive Summary and Procedure of Candidacy. The advertising plan reflects venues used in similar searches, including traditional Higher Ed and a range of specialty venues. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* will capture 85 percent of the targeted audience, with the remaining publications capturing the remainder. *Inside Higher Ed/Jobs* is also an important posting. The range of publications helps to ensure coverage of the widest possible group of diverse candidates. Dr. Jalisa Williams stated the Human Resources office uses the same advertising venues.

The committee agreed to vote on the Leadership Profile with the understanding WittKieffer would incorporate the proposed changes and send the final Profile to the committee before releasing it to candidates.

MOTION made by Melissa Alvarado, seconded by Dr. Gloria Williams, to approve the Leadership Profile as amended in this meeting with the request that the final document be reviewed by the committee prior to being released.

Discussion: It was questioned whether a time to update the campus community would take place this semester. Trustee Martin stated that in addition to sharing the final Leadership Profile with the Commissioner of Higher Education, it would be shared with the campus community, informing them that this document was created to reflect what was heard from them, but would not be edited. The Profile does not need to go to the Board of Trustees before being approved.

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

Melissa Alvarado	Yes	Lydia Martinez-Alvarez	Yes
Dr. Claudia Ciano-Boyce	Yes	Dr. Juline Mills	Yes
Junior Delgado	Yes	Thalita Neves	Yes
George Flevotomos	Yes	Ali Salehi	Yes
Dr. Brian Jennings	Yes	Thomas Simard	Yes
Ron'na J'Q Lytle	Yes	Stephen Taksar	Yes
Dr. Robert Martin	Not Voting	Dr. Gloria Williams	Yes

Motion passed. but fully supportive

WittKieffer would like to recruit from mid-December through early February, updating the committee at a meeting in late January or early February. Semifinalists could be identified in mid-to-late February, followed by interviews 10-14 days after the selection. Following the semifinalist interviews, engagement with finalists could start 10-14 days thereafter.

During interviews, it needs to be explained that Westfield State is part of the Massachusetts Public Education system (defining its relationship with the BHE), what the process is for the evaluation of presidents, and that all priorities need to be aligned with the strategic priorities of the Commonwealth and BHE.

Next Steps: At the next meeting, discuss the voting process for moving candidates forward, the Application Review Rubric to line up with qualifications and qualities listed in the Profile, and bias training. Remember to continue to respect confidentiality in the committee. Any edits to the Profile should be sent in the next 24 hours, and a revised version will be sent on Monday, December 7.

There being no further business, **MOTION** made by Thomas Simard, seconded by Melissa Alvarado, to adjourn.

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

Melissa Alvarado	Yes	Lydia Martinez-Alvarez	Left meeting
Dr. Claudia Ciano-Boyce	Left meeting	Dr. Juline Mills	Yes
Junior Delgado	Yes	Thalita Neves	Yes
George Flevotomos	Yes	Ali Salehi	Yes
Dr. Brian Jennings	Yes	Thomas Simard	Yes
Ron'na J'Q Lytle	Yes	Stephen Taksar	Left meeting
Dr. Robert Martin	Not Voting	Dr. Gloria Williams	Yes

Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 6:18 PM.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

- a. Draft Minutes of November 18, 2020
- b. Draft Leadership Profile
- c. Draft Advertisement
- d. Draft Advertising Plan
- e. Draft Application Review Rubric
- f. Draft Presidential Search Guide