



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Enrollment Management & Student Affairs Committee

April 22, 2025

Minutes

11:00 a.m.

President's Boardroom, Horace Mann Center

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

MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Vice Chair Tessa Lucey
- Secretary Jason Queenin
- Trustee Daniel Currier

Absent were;

- Committee Chair William Reichelt
- Trustee George Gilmer

Also present and participating were;

- Westfield State University President, Dr. Linda Thompson
- Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Dr. Kevin Hearn
- General Counsel and Vice President for Government and Community Relations, Melinda Phelps

Trustee Lucey called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. A roll call was taken of the Trustees participating as listed above and it was announced that the meeting was being livestreamed and recorded.

MOTION made by Trustee Currier seconded by Trustee Queenin, to approve the minutes of the February 20, 2025 meeting. There being no discussion, a roll call was conducted, **motion passed**.

Review of initial Student Affairs KPI report

- Dr. Kevin Hearn introduced a new Key Performance Indicator (KPI) report from the Student Affairs Division.
 - The report highlights outcomes and is intended for internal discussion and to inform success programs.
 - The March report includes data on counseling appointments (273), conduct cases (47), residence hall programs (22), student activities programs (154), and health services clinical visits (243).
- Residence Life successfully managed the housing selection process for 2025-2026.

- Student Activities, Involvement and Leadership (SAIL) hosted the annual Relay for Life event, meeting fundraising goals.
- The Class of 2025 is celebrating "50 days to graduation."
- Professional development training was provided for health and counseling teams.
- Dr. Hearn noted the large numbers of student outreach and support, especially considering the week-long closure for spring break.
- A full spring summary report is anticipated for the next meeting.

Update on Marketing

- Alyssa Goodreau, Director of Marketing, provided lapel pins to the Board encouraging trustees to wear them to promote the University.
- The marketing office is reviewing contracts with EAB (undergraduate marketing) and VisionPoint (DGCE admissions marketing).
- Reinvestment projects, including website redesign and creation of digital assets, are being revisited.
- The University has engaged a third party, BVK, to perform a branding study.
- The University is currently using "Explore, Experience, Excel" as a tagline.

Review of Spring 2025 undergraduate events

- In response to a decline in daily tours and individual visits, the undergraduate admissions staff created new Saturday tours to address scheduling challenges for families.
 - New Saturday programs exceeded the loss of individual and daily tours.
 - The team predicted, identified, and solved challenges in the traditional admission cycle.
 - Dr. Hearn meets with other directors/vice presidents of enrollment management at other state universities and is part of national admissions organizations, noting that this trend is not specific to Westfield State University.

Accepted Student Days (ASD) Events

- Fall open houses and spring accepted student days aim to answer questions and encourage deposits.
- Numbers are down by about 22 students with one event remaining.
- ASD4/OPD is a hybrid event, combining the fourth accepted student day with a spring open house for high school juniors.
- 150 students are registered for ASD Core and Owl Preview Day.
- Collaboration with faculty colleagues, including Dr. Sackett Taylor and Dr. Thompson, enhances events.
- The events showcase the University's community and receive positive feedback.
- Student athletes welcome visitors, and student ambassadors play a crucial role in shaping the experience.

Fall 2025 undergraduate admissions projections

- Spring events contribute to the success of the Fall preview, outpacing last year's increase in undergraduate admissions.
- Year-over-year comparisons are problematic due to FAFSA delays last year.
- The University is experiencing a 24% increase year-over-year.
- It's premature to revisit the goal of 857 students until after the May 1st deadline.

Factors Contributing to Success

- Changes in marketing messages, increased communication, and improved assets.
- Faculty training to help "sell the experience"
- Coalescence around central values and feelings about students.

- Investments in financial aid optimization.
- Consistent rhetoric about Westfield State's identity.

Admissions Data

- The goal is set based on financial aid optimization.
- The number at 857 isn't a significant change from 833 last year but we need to be prepared to see numbers closer to 704 which is what we saw two years ago.
- The difference between deposit totals and deposits is that some have requested their deposits back.

Demographic Cliff

- The demographic cliff is tracked with different data sets that say anywhere between an 8% and 13% decline in the state alone.
- Investments in retention are very important at this point to solving the overall enrollment equation.
- Dr. Hearn calls it an "enrollment equation and not an enrollment problem."

Partnerships and Market Focus

- A two-year audit in partnership with Holyoke Community College (HCC), sponsored by the Aspen Institute, aims to increase student enrollment and success.
- There is a review of a new marketing proposal for the Springfield market to increase market share.
- Most state universities are experiencing declines in transfer students.

Free Community College Impact and Non-Traditional Students

- The impact of Free Community College on the institution is still unclear.
- Two-thirds of community college students are 25 or older and in non-traditional programs.
- There are opportunities to use Division of Graduate and Continuing Education (DGCE) to reformat programs and delivery models to serve non-traditional students.

Policy Revision

General Counsel, Melinda Phelps, spoke further about the free speech policy change;

- Revisions to this policy were made based on work with students and professional colleagues.
- The revised policy was reviewed by the General Counsel, Melinda Phelps, and others.
- The policy aims to balance free expression rights with the regular operation of the university.
- The policy delineates three areas for expressive activities: traditional public forums, limited public expression places, and internal buildings.
- An application form will be developed for expressive activities on campus to ensure coordination.
- The policy encourages free speech while maintaining a classroom learning environment.

MOTION made by Trustee Carrier seconded by Trustee Queenin, The Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Committee recommends to the full Board: To approve the revised Free Speech, Demonstration and Picketing Policy (2030) as presented. There being no discussion, a roll call was conducted, **motion passed**.

MOTION made by Trustee Queenin, and seconded by Trustee Carrier, to adjourn. There being no discussion, **motion passed**.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 AM

Attachments:

- a. Minutes February 20, 2025
- b. BOT Powerpoint
- c. March 2025 KPI Report
- d. Free Speech, Demonstration and Picketing Policy (2030) CLEAN
- e. Free Speech, Demonstration and Picketing Policy (2030) TRACK CHANGES

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 meeting held on April 22, 2025.

Jason Queenin, Secretary

Date