



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Academic Affairs Committee

June 20, 2024

Minutes

Presidents Boardroom, Horace Mann Building

A live stream of the meeting for public viewing also took place on YouTube.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Committee Chair Dr. Gloria Williams, Trustees Daniel Currier, Trustee Lucey and Board Chair Ali Salehi, ex-officio member.

EXCUSED MEMBERS: Secretary Reichelt and Trustee Landrau

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING REMOTELY: Trustee George Gilmer

Also, present were Westfield State University President Dr. Linda Thompson and Interim Provost Dr. David Caruso, and Dr. Ziblim Abukari and Dr. Rebecca Morris.

Committee Chair Williams called the meeting to order at 9:34am 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 Currier seconded by Trustee Gilmer to approve the minutes of the April 25, 2024, meeting.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Trustee Williams	Yes
Trustee Currier	Yes
Trustee Gilmer	Yes
Trustee Lucey	Yes

There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE** passed motion unanimously.

Interim Provost Caruso informed the Board of Trustees of the accomplishments from the academic year 2023-2024.

1. There were thirty-eight (38) academic majors that were successfully delivered to the student body by over forty **fewer** faculty members than we have had for over five years now. It was quite an effort from the faculty to carry out the curriculum. We had thirteen (13) searches to bring new tenure trac faculty members to campus and twelve of the searches were successful. This is the first time in several years that we bring many new faculty members to campus. There will be senior faculty members that will be retiring in the next few years so It's important to start the process of hiring new faculty.

2. Academic Affairs reopened the Deans Office for the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education since the DGCE had been disseminated around campus with no leadership for the Division. Dr. Nora Padykula has been named the Dean and Jessica Tansey is the Associate Dean to lead the division. The leadership will make a difference with DGCE and will be a key to the finance sustainability of the campus.

3. A notable accomplishment was the redevelopment of the senior leadership for Academic Affairs. During the pandemic, there was a temporary structure made up of four associate deans running the four schools. We have now restructured to a two-college structure: College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Professional Studies. Each school will be led by two of the associate deans and as of July 1, 2024, will be appointed as the Interim Deans. Dr. Sabine Klein and Dr. Ziblim Abukari will lead the two schools. There is now five senior leaders for Academic Affairs: Provost, Associate Provost, Dean of DGCE and the two Deans for the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Professional Studies.

4. The provost office staff has been organized by appropriately assigning functional reporting of all of Academic Affairs to either the Provost or to the Associate Provost which is set up to be more effective for the incoming Provost William Salka.

5. There was a new Center for Teaching and Learning launched to support faculty excellence in curriculum and instruction that will begin in the fall.

6. Reorganized the Office of Institutional Research and created the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment and relocated the accreditation functions. The programmatic accreditation approvals for all our academics that require external accreditation to the Deans offices will now be appropriately managed.

7. We created a faculty mini grant program to support faculty scholarships on an ongoing basis. A year ago, the University had 12 externally funded grants with less than a million dollars brought into the campus. Today we have 34 funded external grants funded bringing in almost ten million dollars in funding to the university. This is a credit to the faculty to seek and acquire extra funding. President Thompson received credit for her supporting that work by connecting the faculty with an external firm that guides to the faculty.

8. The new General Education program. A significant amount of work has been done over the last three years by faculty and will be launched in September. Freshmen will enroll in new journey classes that are part of the General Education program. There are 40 new classes that are being fully staffed and they will not be the typical disciplined-based class. They are all unique topically based interdisciplinary cross-departmental classes that will support a successful college career and their retention. The work involved in getting this program together was unsurmountable. The Governance committee and Curriculum committee had many new course approvals above and beyond the usual. This was one of the items in the NECHE report that was important for us to launch. The two-year review with NECHE is due January 15, 2025.

9. The Bachelor of Fine Arts degree was approved by the Board of Higher Education, and it is the first to be offered here at the University in its 185th year history.

10. Launching this year is a Bachelor's degree in Occupational Therapy Assistant studies. There are many Bachelor degrees that are being developed such as Data Analytics, BFA in interdisciplinary Arts, a Green Entrepreneurship, Business Analytics degree, Health Care Innovation and a Leadership

bachelor's degree that is a pathway from programs in the community college into the bachelor's degree and then lead into a Master's in that field.

Previous Committee Chairman, Robert Martin, complimented the Interim Provost, David Caruso, for a job well done this past year. Board Chair Ali Salehi stated he appreciated the expertise of Robert Martin during his time on the Board.

The upcoming turnover from faculty (10 vacant positions from retirement and resignations this year) is important to plan for the succession of the faculty members and the department.

Discussion regarding the Master in Business between the Trustees and Dr. Rebecca Morris.

Discussion regarding the Master of Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner between the Trustees and Jessica Holden, Associate Dean of Nursing.

MOTION made by Trustee Currier, seconded by Trustee Lucey to approve the Master in Business Administration. **Motion passed unanimously.**

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Trustee Williams	Yes
Trustee Currier	Yes
Trustee Gilmer	Yes
Trustee Lucey	Yes

MOTION made by Trustee Currier seconded by Trustee Gilmore to approve the Master of Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner. **Motion passed unanimously.**

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Trustee Williams	Yes
Trustee Currier	Yes
Trustee Gilmer	Yes
Trustee Lucey	Yes

There being no further business,

MOTION made by Trustee Currier, seconded by Trustee Gilmer to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Trustee Williams	Yes
Trustee Currier	Yes
Trustee Gilmer	Yes
Trustee Lucey	Yes

Meeting adjourned at 10:35am.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

- a. Draft Minutes of April 25, 2024
- b. Letter of Intent. MBA

- c. Motion - Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- d. Letter of Intent. Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
- e. Motion – Master of Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner

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 Academic Affairs Committee meeting held on June 20, 2024.

William Reichelt, Secretary

Date

Enrollment and Retention at Westfield State University

Board of Trustees Meeting

October 23, 2024

Retention and Graduation Rates at Westfield

- The Average First to Second Year Retention Rate from Fall 2015 through Fall 2024 is 75%
- The Average Second to Third Year Retention Rate from Fall 2015 through Fall 2024 is 65%
- This means Westfield loses one-third of each incoming class before they reach their junior year

Historic Retention Data

Retention at Westfield

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
1 st to 2 nd	78.4 ⁰ %	77.3%	78.4%	74.6%	72.3%	72.8%	75.5%	75.4%	71.2%	73.9%
2 nd to 3 rd	70.0%	68.0%	68.2%	64.4%	64.0%	60.6%	61.0%	64.4%	61.6%	

Retention at Other Mass State Universities: Retained into Fall 2023

	Bridgewater	Fitchburg	Framingham	MassArt	MCLA	MassMaritime	Salem	Worcester	Avg.
1 st to 2 nd	75%	72%	71%	84%	64%	78%	75%	75%	74%

Four and Six Year Graduation Rates

Four and Six Year Graduation Rates at Westfield

	2014*	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
4 Year	50.6%	49.2%	52.4%	44.1%	37.5%	34.4%
6 Year	63.1%	60.6%	59.8%	54.9%		

*Year each cohort began at WSU

Four and Six Year Graduation Rates at other MSUs: 2017 Cohorts

	Bridgewater	Fitchburg	Framingham	MassArt	MCLA	MassMaritime	Salem	Worcester	Avg.
4 Year	39%	37%	37%	59%	49%	66%	42%	47%	47%
6 Year	62%	57%	50%	74%	58%	78%	57%	61%	61%

Low Cost Initiatives to Improve Retention

- Dual Advising Program
 - Every first and second year student is assigned both a faculty and professional advisor
 - No additional advising staff are needed
 - Mandatory to meet with both every semester
 - Faculty continue to provide the PIN
 - Gives every student a professional advisor as a point of contact if their faculty advisor is not responsive, even after their second year
 - Timeline: Began the conversation Fall 2024

Campaign to Increase Use of WSU 360

- WSU 360 is an early alert system that allows faculty and staff to identify students who are struggling for any reason
 - Once identified, the appropriate office(s) can respond to assist the student
 - This is a very expensive but underutilized EAB product
 - Engage in a campaign to train faculty and staff to use the product and the importance of doing so

Utilize Predictive Analytics Provided by Starfish

- The contract with EAB provides predictive analytics on the likelihood a particular student will be retained based on several variables
 - Produces an “At-Risk” score for every incoming student and updates the score as the students moves through each semester
 - Professional advisors and other staff can identify students who need more aggressive intervention early on
 - We will reconvene the Retention Committee to do this work
 - Timeline: Will need training and policies of the ethical use of these data before the tool is opened to the staff. Provost’s office began using it this fall

Westfield in Four

- Westfield in Four will map all of the graduation requirements, including general education, for every major in a spreadsheet
 - Allows students to identify the courses they will take and plan their schedule to graduate in four years
 - Every first-year student will complete these plans with their professional advisor in the fall semester
 - Timeline: Began conversations in Fall 2024

Student Support Training for All Administrative Assistants

- Administrative Assistants are often the first people students encounter when entering an office with questions
- Given the numerous changes over the last several years, some may not know the answer to many questions
- Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management and Student Affairs will host a training session in January, bringing representatives from all student support offices to explain the circumstances under which a student should be referred to them
- A summary sheet with contact information will be distributed and placed on the website