



Board of Trustees

JEDI Committee

December 18, 2025

9:45am-10:15am

Loughman Living Room, Scanlon Hall

Committee Members: Chair Tessa Lucey, Vice Chair Michael O'Rourke, Secretary Melissa Alvarado, Dr. Gloria Williams, George Gilmer

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

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| 1. Call to Order | Trustee Tessa Lucey, Committee Chair |
| 2. Approval of Minutes | Trustee Tessa Lucey, Committee Chair |
| a. Minutes of June 11, 2025 | |
| 3. Items for Information | William Salka, Provost |
| a. Reorganization of the Office of Belonging, Inclusion, and Learning | |
| 4. Adjournment | Trustee Tessa Lucey, Committee Chair |

Attachments:

- a. Minutes of June 11, 2025
- b. Power Point Reorganization of the Office of Belonging, Inclusion and Learning



Board of Trustees
Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee
June 11, 2025, 10:30 a.m.
Minutes

Conference Rooms A & B, University Hall

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: Committee Chair Tessa Lucey, Vice Chair Michael O'Rourke, Secretary Melissa Alvarado, Trustee George Gilmer, Trustee Gloria Williams and Board Chair Ali Salehi, ex-officio member.

Also present and participating were Westfield State University President, Dr. Linda Thompson; Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. William Salka; and Director of Belonging, Inclusion, and Learning, Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola.

Committee Chair Tessa Lucey called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.m. 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 Williams seconded by Trustee Gilmer to approve the minutes of the April 22, 2025, meeting. There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE**, motion passed.

Belonging, Inclusion, and Learning Update

Dr. William Salka introduced Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola, the Director of Belonging, Inclusion, and Learning. Ms. Spitz-Gassnola provided a recap of programming and campus engagements since the last meeting.

Spring 2025 Highlights Recap

- Sankofa celebration on April 24:
 - 200 guests.
 - Honored ancestral and generational resilience, student success, and community strength.
 - Honored founding members of the Sankofa Fund and alumni at Westfield State University.

Academic Year Accomplishments

- Aligned office with institutional priorities.
- Introduced unified language and launched an official logo.
- Built relationships with campus unions and administration.

- Secured external partnerships.
- Office became a trusted partner in capacity building and training.
- Led and took part in over 10 inclusion and access related trainings.
- Supported more than 30 events uplifting culture and community voice.
- Hosted 20+ external speakers and creatives.
- Team engaged in 10+ professional development opportunities.
- Produced three major newsletters.
- Improved marketing and social media presence, reinvigorated Instagram.
- Updated website to be more user friendly and informative.
- Made equity work more visible and engaging.
- Created spaces and events that have become touch points for reflection, celebration, and dialogue.

Preparation and Alignment for the Upcoming Academic Year

- Reviewing this past year's programming to understand impact.
- Acknowledgement that we embraced opportunities to learn and evolve.
- Documenting internal processes to improve continuity.
- Co-designing fall 2025 initiatives with student leadership and campus partners.
- Updating training content and creating new workshops on topics like cultural humility.
- Trainings with student leaders over the summer.
- Exploring new tools to manage projects more effectively and meet timelines.
- Goal: To enter the fall ready, responsive, and rooted in purpose.

Investing in Longer Term Growth

- Exploring restorative and transformative justice frameworks to support student conduct and community accountability.
- Considering and framing a future launch of an Emerging Leaders program.
- Designing learning modules to center institutional history and cultural awareness.
- Assisting in the creation of a cross-campus Council for shared decision making.
- Staying connected to statewide networks to stay ahead of policy changes and to thoughtfully incorporate best practices into program development.
- Planting seeds for institutional transformation and growth.
- Ensuring work is sustainable and deeply rooted.

Measurement of Success

- There will be a creation of a cohesive strategic plan with key performance indicators for the upcoming year to measure student engagement.
- Future plans to measure student engagement to better understand which constituencies are attending events and what areas of interest students are gravitating toward, so we can tailor meaningful content that resonates with each group.

Climate Survey

- It's important to get a sense of the campus climate.
- Conversations are happening around using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).
- Short, accurate surveys are needed to set a benchmark for measuring progress.

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

- NSSE is a good survey, typically offered to freshmen and seniors.

- The last time it was administered was during the pandemic so the data was skewed. It's time to reinstitute the NSSE, but input is needed to ask the right questions and avoid over-surveying students.

There being no further business,

MOTION made by Trustee Williams, and seconded by Trustee Alvarado, to adjourn.
ROLL CALL VOTE passed motion unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 10:53 AM.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

- a. Minutes of April 22, 2025
- b. Belonging, Inclusion and Learning Presentation

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 Governance and Nomination Committee meeting held on June 11, 2025.

Melissa Alvarado, Secretary

Date

Reorganization of the Office of Belonging, Inclusion, and Learning

Board of Trustees Meeting

December 18, 2025

The Office of Belonging Divided into Two Sections with Co-Directors

- Director for Student Success and Engagement
 - Azanda Seymour
- Director for Strategic Vision & Campus Integration
 - Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola
- Both Positions Report Directly to the Provost

Responsibilities and Core Constituents

	Director for Student Success and Engagement	Director for Strategic Vision & Campus Engagement
Primary Focus	Direct student support, programming, and engagement to enhance belonging and student success	Strategic Planning, institutional integration, and fostering external partnerships to advance goals of Belonging
Key Responsibilities	➤ Mentor and advocate for underrepresented affinity groups ➤ Partner with Student Affairs on various initiatives ➤ Lead planning and support of major campus events (Unity Fest, Sankofa) ➤ Develop inclusive spaces ➤ Support recruitment and orientation ➤ Deliver training for students, faculty, and staff	➤ Advise Cabinet on campus climate ➤ Conduct and analyze campus climate studies – track and report KPIs ➤ Partner with academic departments to integrate Belonging into operations and curricula ➤ Strengthen community partnerships for recruitment and retention
Core Constituents	➤ Underrepresented Students ➤ Student facing staff	➤ Senior leadership ➤ Faculty/Staff ➤ External partners
Programming	Implements student-centered activities that affirm identity and build community	Creates and oversees academic and community programs

Other Responsibilities

	Director for Student Success and Engagement	Director for Strategic Vision & Campus Engagement
Assessment	Tracks event participation, evaluates program effectiveness, and uses data to improve	Uses data to assess institutional performance on Belonging. Informs policy and strategic changes
Partnerships	Collaborates with campus offices focused on student engagement, leadership, and retention	Builds cross-campus and external partnerships to embed Belonging across academic and administrative functions
External Engagement	Represents the office at student and campus events. Limited external role	Represents the University in local and state-wide initiatives
Resource Development	Manages budgets and resources to support student programs	Pursues grant funding and other support to enhance strategic equity initiatives

Questions?