



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes

April 29, 2021

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, Madeline Landrau, Robert Magovern, Dr. Robert Martin, Thalita Neves, Ali Salehi, and Dr. Gloria Williams

Dr. Roy Saigo, Interim President of Westfield State University, and Attorney James Cox were also participating remotely.

The meeting was called to order at 2:31 PM by Chair Queenin, and a roll call identified the members participating remotely as listed above. It was announced the meeting was being live streamed, and, as a result, recorded.

General Announcements. Chair Queenin thanked the Board for participating in the process and selecting Dr. Linda Thompson as Westfield State University's 21st president.

President's Report. President Saigo said that nine months had passed since his arrival at Westfield State and all the hard work that has taken place has happened without his meeting many of the Trustees. He thanked Dr. Robert Kersting, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, for his years of service to the University. He gave an overview of Dr. Kersting's accomplishments, saying he was the first Social Work faculty member 25 years ago. The department grew to 11 faculty and Dr. Kersting became the chair. Suggestions and strong support from the campus community pointed to Dean Juline Mills as a replacement for the Interim Provost position. Dean Mills has comprehensive skills and institutional knowledge that would provide strong leadership going forward. President Saigo nominated and strongly recommended the appointment of Dr. Juline Mills as the next Provost/Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

President Saigo continued with a summary of where we are at Westfield State University (WSU). The US Labor Department reports that over 570,000 university and college workers have been laid off since the pandemic started. He shared examples of his prior experiences at other universities where he assisted in pulling them out of lawsuits, grievances, complaints, retrenchments, and falling enrollments. When he was recruited to Westfield State in 2020, there was lack of communication and trust, a presidential no-confidence vote, declining enrollment, and increasing budget problems creating a major deficit. Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Despite the crisis, he shared that there was a new opportunity for a fresh look to make different choices. He couldn't let retrenchment and furloughs happen at WSU. He spoke with Dean Mills about creating a committee to study how to make the institution more efficient and complete their findings by the end of 2020.

He gave the committee a charge as the University Efficiency Analysis Advisory Committee (UEEAC), reporting to the president. He mentioned that members of the Board have embraced the recommendations and the implementation of many are underway. There are increased levels of trust, respect, and communication, which has produced change. UEAAC has expanded from 22 members to 120 people working in subcommittees to implement the recommendations. We are on the cusp of greatness. The UEAAC process and governance model will have an impact on other campuses. President Saigo explained that a model of shared, participatory leadership and a game plan to move forward with the assistance of a new president and provost has been developed. *Note: For the full President’s Report presented at the meeting, see attached as submitted by President Saigo following the April 29 meeting.*

Student Trustee Report. At the request of Chair Queenin, Trustee Neves gave an overview of her Senior Honors Project, stating she reached gathered common immigration questions and researched answers in federal laws. She put answers in video format, translated it into Portuguese, and posted on YouTube. She continued with her report that students are still doing amazing things in the middle of a pandemic like presenting at national conferences and honors society presentations. Classes end May 4. The Student Government Association (SGA) held elections and announced officers. Chloe Sanfacon was elected as student trustee. Trustee Neves addressed comments from WittKieffer that many candidates mentioned that WSU had a lot to improve on with trust and healing. She said that the Board needs to be the change we wish to see in the University and she challenged the Board and the other groups on campus to join together to make Westfield stronger.

Safe Opening Update. Mr. Richard Lenfest, Jr., Director of Athletics and Chair of the Safe Opening Task Force, expressed appreciation for allowing a robust testing program, administering close to 22,000 tests this semester. The key to the success of keeping students on campus was due the consistency of testing, the campus protocols put in place, and the students, faculty, and staff respecting and cooperating with the rules and increased protocols. A smooth opening committee chaired by Dean Maggie Balch is working prepare for a more robust campus in the fall. Control plans and vaccine protocols should be coming from the state.

Ratification of Executive Committee Action to Award Financial Audit Services for FY21. Chair Queenin stated that due to time constraints, the Executive Committee met on April 22 to discuss and approve the following action. Stephen Taksar, Vice President for Administration and Finance, stated the contract for audit services had expired and the University participated in a joint procurement for a new service contract. In early April the Audit Committee met and approved O’Connor and Drew as the audit firm going forward as a result of the competitive procurement. The Executive Committee approved the Audit Committee’s motion last week. At today’s Audit Committee meeting, the engagement letter was approved.

MOTION made by Trustee Martinez-Alvarez, seconded by Trustee Sullivan, to ratify the actions of the Executive Committee on April 22, 2021 to award Westfield State University’s financial auditing services to O’Connor & Drew P.C., in response to the joint request for proposal with Cape Cod Community College (RFP#21-05). This contract is for three years with the possibility of two, one-year extensions. The audit manager shall be changed at least every two years.

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

Trustee Alvarado	Yes	Trustee Neves	Yes
Trustee Boudreau	Yes	Trustee Salehi	Yes
Trustee Landrau	Yes	Trustee Sullivan	Yes
Trustee Magovern	Yes	Trustee Williams	Yes
Trustee Martin	Yes	Trustee Queenin	Yes
Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes		

Motion passed unanimously.

Advancement and Enrollment Management Committee. Committee Chair Martinez-Alvarez stated that in the committee meeting they discussed the Institutional Dashboard, Give a Hoot, Evening of Discovery, enrollment update, and HEERF funding. One hundred percent of all boards gave to the Give a Hoot campaign and it is tracking to be the best fundraising year. There is a special evening of discovery to benefit the College Math and Science where we will be able to witness Newton’s law of gravity in action. There are continuing efforts for recruitments through the summer and an additional \$700,000 was allocated for financial aid.

Academic and Student Affairs Committee. Committee Chair Dr. Robert Martin stated that in the committee meeting they received recommendations for faculty and tenure approvals. There was also a presentations from Dr. Azanda Seymour, the new Executive Director for the Center for Student Success and Engagement and her team working collaboratively for student success and engagement. There was also a presentation from Dr. Gloria Lopez, Vice President for Student Affairs, members of her team, and eight student leaders talking about how they became engaged in the WSU community.

Dr. Kersting gave an overview of the information on the process of tenure and promotion. It is a lengthy process to be tenured or promoted and a major accomplishment for each member to pull together. Dr. Kersting presented each of the following candidates for promotion to associate professor and professor, noting the service and accomplishments for each.

MOTION made by Trustee Martin, seconded by Trustee Sullivan, to approve the granting of promotion to the rank of Associate Professor, effective September 1, 2021, to:

Dr. Paul Cacolice	Movement Science, Sport, and Leisure Studies
Dr. Heather Caldwell	Ethnic and Gender Studies
Dr. Amanda Salacinski	Movement Science, Sport, and Leisure Studies
Dr. Jamie Rivera	Nursing

To approve the granting of promotion to the rank of Professor, effective September 1, 2021, to:

Dr. Heidi Bohler	Movement Science, Sport, and Leisure Studies
Dr. Byung Jun Cho	Criminal Justice
Dr. Susanne Chuku	Economics and Management
Ms. Heather Crocker-Aulenback	English
Dr. Terri Griffin	Education
Dr. Lynn Pantuosco-Hensch	Movement Science, Sport, and Leisure Studies
Dr. Mark Horwitz	Social Work
Mr. James McNamara	English
Dr. Alice Perry	Criminal Justice
Dr. Daniel Price	Criminal Justice
Dr. Jennifer Propp	Social Work
Dr. Tamara Smith	Sociology
Dr. Karsten Theis	Chemical and Physical Sciences
Dr. Summer Williams	Psychology

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

Trustee Alvarado	Yes	Trustee Neves	Yes
Trustee Boudreau	Yes	Trustee Salehi	Yes
Trustee Landrau	Yes	Trustee Sullivan	Yes
Trustee Magovern	Yes	Trustee Williams	Yes
Trustee Martin	Yes	Trustee Queenin	Yes

Trustee Martinez-Alvarez Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Kersting presented each of the following candidates for tenure and tenure with automatic promotion, noting the service and accomplishments for each.

MOTION made by Trustee Martin, seconded by Trustee Landrau, to approve the granting of tenure with automatic promotion, effective September 1, 2021, to:

Dr. Adeyinka Banwo	History
Dr. Jessica Holden	Nursing
Dr. Samuel Ndegeah	Geography, Planning, and Sustainability
Dr. Susan Scott	Nursing

To approve the granting of tenure, effective September 1, 2021, to:

Dr. Miriam Tager	Education
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There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

Trustee Alvarado	Yes	Trustee Neves	Yes
Trustee Boudreau	Yes	Trustee Salehi	Yes
Trustee Landrau	Yes	Trustee Sullivan	Yes
Trustee Magovern	Yes	Trustee Williams	Yes
Trustee Martin	Yes	Trustee Queenin	Yes
Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes		

Motion passed unanimously.

President Saigo stated these individuals are superior and are evaluated on advising, teaching, service and scholarship. He said that if the quality of our faculty were publicized, our enrollments would soar.

Finance and Capital Assets Committee. Committee Chair Edward Sullivan stated at the committee meeting they reviewed the FY21 third quarter financials, FY21 capital projects, consolidation of accounts, investment update from Eaton Vance Wateroak Advisors, Higher Ed Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) allocations, and discussion on the FY22 provisional budget.

University Efficiency Analysis Advisory Committee (UEAAC) Update. Committee Chair Dr. Juline Mills said the committee is reaffirming the goals of the process with 120 people working in the 15 subgroups. She gave updates on the progress of recommendations and would like to engage the Board in dialogue on each recommendation. The work continues to advance.

MOTION made by Trustee Sullivan, seconded by Trustee Alvarado, to approve the changes and accept the newly revised Trust Fund Management Policy (0604), as presented.

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

Trustee Alvarado	Yes	Trustee Neves	Yes
Trustee Boudreau	Yes	Trustee Salehi	Yes
Trustee Landrau	Yes	Trustee Sullivan	Yes
Trustee Magovern	Yes	Trustee Williams	Yes
Trustee Martin	Yes	Trustee Queenin	Yes
Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes		

Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION made by Trustee Sullivan, seconded by Trustee Williams, to approve the use of campus reserves in FY22 up to \$700,000 for supplemental financial aid awards of institutional grant funds. This is a one-year allocation from campus reserves which will be reassessed prior to FY23 in terms of future funding strategies.

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

Trustee Alvarado	Yes	Trustee Neves	Yes
Trustee Boudreau	Yes	Trustee Salehi	Yes
Trustee Landrau	Yes	Trustee Sullivan	Yes
Trustee Magovern	Yes	Trustee Williams	Yes
Trustee Martin	Yes	Trustee Queenin	Yes
Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes		

Motion passed unanimously.

Audit Committee. Committee Chair Paul Boudreau discussed the performance audit compliance update with two minor matters that have been responded to.

MOTION made by Trustee Martin , seconded by Trustee Williams, to engage the financial audit services of O’Connor and Drew P.C., for FY21.

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

Trustee Alvarado	Yes	Trustee Neves	Yes
Trustee Boudreau	Yes	Trustee Salehi	Yes
Trustee Landrau	Yes	Trustee Sullivan	Yes
Trustee Magovern	Yes	Trustee Williams	Yes
Trustee Martin	Yes	Trustee Queenin	Yes
Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes		

Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION made by Trustee Martin, seconded by Trustee Magovern, to approve the changes and accept the newly revised Audit Committee Charter Policy (0460), as presented.

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

Trustee Alvarado	Yes	Trustee Neves	Yes
Trustee Boudreau	Yes	Trustee Salehi	Yes
Trustee Landrau	Yes	Trustee Sullivan	Yes
Trustee Magovern	Yes	Trustee Williams	Yes
Trustee Martin	Yes	Trustee Queenin	Yes
Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes		

Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION made by Trustee Martin, seconded by Trustee Sullivan, to accept the audit report on the audit procedures required pursuant to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Guidance for fiscal year ending June 30, 2020 as prepared by the firm of O’Connor & Drew P.C., and to authorize the submission of this report to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse and to other parties as required by OMB Uniform Guidance and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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

Trustee Alvarado	Yes	Trustee Neves	Yes
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Trustee Boudreau	Yes	Trustee Salehi	Yes
Trustee Landrau	Yes	Trustee Sullivan	Yes
Trustee Magovern	Yes	Trustee Williams	Yes
Trustee Martin	Yes	Trustee Queenin	Yes
Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes		

Motion passed unanimously.

Governance and Nomination Committee. Committee Chair Melissa Alvarado stated an updated training tracker was being sent to the Board. A Board assessment tool will be sent to Trustees and the results discussed with Dr. Thompson. A survey will be coming for preferences on committee assignments and input on Board officers.

Approval of Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Trustee Martin stated he had the opportunity to work closely with Dean Mills on the Presidential Search Committee and to see her work on UEAAC. Her work ethic is prodigious and she has the amazing ability to bring people together and work constructively on complicated problems, which will serve her well in the role of Interim Provost.

MOTION made by Trustee Martin, seconded by Trustee Sullivan, to approve Interim President Roy Saigo, PhD, to make an offer to Dean Juline Mills, PhD, for the appointment of Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The final offer letter and terms will be approved by the board.

Discussion: President Saigo supports this motion and stated that Dean Mills served as the chair of UEAAC. Those who have worked with her have recognized her unmistakable skills as a highly organized, forward-thinking, consensus-building, and solutions-focused leader. She was recently appointed to the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE). Her experience guiding the UEAAC research and implementation will be of immeasurable assistance to the new president in pursuing a healthy future for WSU. She is a caring and empathetic person. She has the ability to successfully negotiate group dynamics and maintain focus on complex tasks and brings many different points of view because of her diverse experiences. He is honored to nominate Dean Juline Mills for this position. Pending Board approval, he looks forward to welcoming Dr. Mills to the executive leadership team on May 17, 2021. *Note: For the full nomination presented at the meeting, see attached as submitted by President Saigo following the April 29 meeting.*

Trustee Martinez-Alvarez stated the University is going through accreditation now and having Dr. Mills in this position is a great asset. She has gone above and beyond her duties and we should consider giving her more than one year to get through the accreditation process. It was questioned whether acting as interim would prohibit Dr. Mills from holding the position in future. It would not.

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

Trustee Alvarado	Yes	Trustee Neves	Yes
Trustee Boudreau	Yes	Trustee Salehi	Yes
Trustee Landrau	Yes	Trustee Sullivan	Yes
Trustee Magovern	Yes	Trustee Williams	Yes
Trustee Martin	Yes	Trustee Queenin	Yes
Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes		

Motion passed unanimously.

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 Salehi	Yes
Trustee Landrau	Yes	Trustee Sullivan	Yes
Trustee Magovern	Yes	Trustee Williams	Yes
Trustee Martin	Yes	Trustee Queenin	Yes
Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes		

Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 4:33 PM.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

Executive Committee:

- a. Motion – Ratification of Executive Committee Action to Award Financial Audit Services for FY21

Academic and Student Affairs Committee:

- b. Presentation – Tenure and Promotion Candidates 2021
- c. Tenure and Promotion Criteria
- d. Motion: Promotion
- e. Promotion – Recommendations and Justifications
- f. Motion: Tenure
- g. Tenure – Recommendations and Justifications

Finance and Capital Assets Committee:

- h. Motion – Trust Fund Management Policy (0604)
- i. Trust Fund Management Policy (0604) Track Changes
- j. Trust Fund Management Policy (0604) No Track Changes
- k. Motion – Request to use Campus Reserves
- l. Request to use Campus Reserves (Summary)

Audit Committee:

- m. Motion – Engagement of Financial Audit Services for FY21
- n. Engagement Letter of Financial Audit Services FY21
- o. Motion – Audit Committee Charter
- p. Policy – Audit Committee Charter (0460) (Track Changes)
- q. Motion – Uniform Guidance Report
- r. Uniform Guidance Report (Draft)

Full Board Action:

- s. Motion – Appointment of Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

WSU TRUSTEES MEETING 4/29/21

Dr. Roy H. Saigo, Interim President, Westfield State University

President's Report and Nomination of Dean Juline Mills for Provost position

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello everyone. It is amazing to realize that 9 months have passed since my arrival at Westfield State. It is unfortunate that all of our hard work took place without my meeting most of you in person and having a chance to establish personal relationships. I find that to be a big loss for me.

Today I will first provide comments on the position of Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Then I will reflect on our progress as a university this year and look ahead.

First of all, I would like to thank Interim Provost Bob Kersting for his years of service to Westfield State University. In fact, Trustee Martin hired Dr. Kersting to be the first Social Work faculty member almost 25 years ago. From there the department grew to 11 faculty members, and Dr. Kersting served as the departmental chair.

The department has very popular and highly regarded undergraduate and graduate programs, which are both accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. It has expanded its reach to a satellite Master's program at the YWCA in Worcester. We are appreciative of all the students – past, present, and future – who have and will continue to be educated in our Social Work programs.

Dr. Kersting has contributed to numerous committees during his tenure at Westfield and also has served his profession in national associations.

In 2020, he stepped up to serve as our Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, assisting us during this very difficult year.

Thank you, Bob. We appreciate you and hope you will enjoy your retirement.

As I started investigating for a person to replace Dr. Kersting as Provost, suggestions and strong support from faculty, staff, and administrators pointed to Dean Juline Mills.

Conversations with union leaders, department chairs, and others affirmed my own observations that Dean Mills has a comprehensive array of skills and institutional understanding that would provide strong and competent leadership going forward.

So now: I officially nominate and strongly recommend the appointment of Dr. Juline Mills as the next Provost/Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. I am looking forward to having Chair Queenin move your approval of my nomination. I will share more information about Dean Mills at that time.

Now I would like to summarize some of where we are at WSU.

Some national context:

From the time the pandemic hit the USA, the US Labor Department has reported that over 570,000 university and college workers have been laid off. Fernando Zamudio Suarez, reporting in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, has tried to interview these laid-off colleagues.

However, he has had a very difficult time finding people to be interviewed. He felt some of the reasons may be that they are too embarrassed, frustrated, or still grieving. He wondered that many may see this beyond just a loss of a paycheck but also a loss of self-worth.

He interviewed a Physics professor at the University of Akron who felt she was safe, but then the university fired 96 professors and it was very difficult for her to adjust. Another person taught ESL at Saginaw State University, was furloughed, then laid off. She now works in a Fairfield Inn starting at 7am checking people in and out, caring for the coffee bar and breakfast. She does not tell her customers she has a PhD.

570,000 very similar stories are being written across this nation, and it will take a long time for systemic recovery to occur.

Some of my previous campuses:

When I arrived at St Cloud State in 2000, there was a stack of folders on my desk. There were three class-action lawsuits, 139 grievances and complaints, and the enrollments were collapsing. Campus morale was very low. What a mess to inherit, right? I called it the Perfect Storm. By the time I retired in 2007, there were no lawsuits and grievances and the enrollment set a record high.

When I arrived at Southern Oregon University in 2014, the enrollment was down, there had been two retrenchments, programs and departments had been cut, we had \$4 million dollars in Alternative Professional Assignments, and a no confidence vote in the president and two vice presidents. Campus morale was very low.

The faculty referenced the old saying, that doing the same things over and over and expecting different results, is the definition of insanity. That's what was happening.

When I left in 2016 the enrollment was growing, we were out of retrenchment and in the black financially, with a multimillion-dollar reserve. There were no furloughs or further program reductions. Unfortunately, the forward momentum was subsequently lost and employees are now experiencing 20% salary reductions through furloughs.

I share these examples so you will understand some problems I dealt with prior to coming to WSU.

Westfield State University:

In 2020 I was recruited to Westfield. You all are familiar, to a greater or lesser extent, with what we have dealt with and what we have accomplished this year.

When I came:

- There was lack of communication and trust among the faculty, administration, and Board of Trustees.
- There was a presidential no-confidence vote.
- There had been declining enrollment and increasing budget problems for a few years, creating a major deficit.
- Then COVID-19 hit. WSU and all other educational institutions were immediately and deeply affected.

All of these conditions created a crisis, but also an opportunity for a fresh look and making different choices.

I remember vividly, in August, that I had to ask the Department of Higher Education for permission to consider furloughs for WSU. Seeing what SOU had gone through with two retrenchments and furloughs in ten years, I decided I couldn't let that happen to WSU.

Retrenchment and furloughs are too damaging to the faculty and staff, our programs, and our reputation. Students have a choice of where they want to go, and they do not want to attend an institution that is in political discord, financial deficit, and uncertainty.

At this point Dean Juline Mills and I had a conversation.

What could we do, as a university:

- To help ourselves?
- To confront the need to become as efficient as possible?
- To more closely match our expenses with our income?
- To identify our strengths and weaknesses?

Could we define a committee, coordinate members from across campus, and complete the study and recommendations by the end of 2020?

I asked her, do you feel we have enough dedication for a group of employees to work both their daytime jobs and do data collection, analysis, and recommendations on their off hours? She answered, "YES! Let us do it."

I gave the committee a charge as the University Efficiency Analysis Advisory Committee, reporting to the President. Vice President Steve Taksar agreed to assist and advise. All three unions bought into it. Of the 25 original members, 22 persisted through the process.

All agreed to set aside personal connections and to collect and analyze data as impartially as possible, to be led by the data, to look at positions rather than the individuals occupying those positions. No sacred cows.

There were risks.

- What if the discussions and recommendations were self-serving?
- What if the people representing different parts of the university became defensive, protective, and challenging?
- What if the sheer strain and fatigue got to people and the effort disintegrated?

If that happened, I would be discredited in the eyes of the university faculty and staff, the students, the BOT, and the Commissioner's office. Everyone would feel the loss.

But now, look what we have achieved.

I am proud of UEAAC's process and results. I am very pleased that members of the BOT have embraced the recommendations and that implementation of most of the recommendations is underway. In addition, the process is already informing enrollment and course management.

You have heard me praise the increased levels of TRUST, RESPECT, AND COMMUNICATION that have been actively nurtured this year. That is a huge outcome, not to be taken lightly.

But, we all need to be aware, going forward, that these working relationships can easily be damaged unless there is active and ongoing commitment to the philosophy and actions that built them.

With trust and respect, we are now engaged in CHANGE. Another weighty concept.

From the 22 dedicated and budget-educated committee members, we have expanded to more than 100 people working in subcommittees to implement the UEAAC recommendations.

And, the university community is doing it themselves. Remember when Rhode Island College contracted briefly with a consulting firm to do a similar analysis? \$760,000 for 4 people for 10 weeks. By comparison, the effort and pinpointed results of UEAAC would cost out at multiple millions, and the work goes on.

This is what happens when you have a loyal, dedicated, driven, organized group of employees who genuinely care about Westfield State. You can't buy that. This is the hardest working group of people I've met. We all must be appreciative and proud.

Also, let me say, as a consultant for *The Registry*, that I believe we are on the cusp of greatness. The UEAAC process, recommendations, template for our Core, and governance model will have an impact on other campuses.

The Department of Higher Education has become engaged. The UEAAC process and results are becoming known both within and beyond Massachusetts.

You all should be proud. We have developed a vigorous esprit de corps, a model of shared, participatory leadership, and a game plan to move us forward with the assistance of a new president and provost.

We are ready. We have the team. We have the game plan. We have the energy. We are ready for the Big Show.

Go Owls!

Thank you.

**PRESIDENT SAIGO'S COMMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THE MOTION TO OFFER THE INTERIM PROVOST
AND VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS POSITION TO DEAN JULINE MILLS**

April 29, 2021

Thank you, Chair Queenin, for the motion to offer the position of Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs to Dean Juline Mills.

Since 2018 Dr. Mills has served as Dean of our College of Education, Health, and Human Services, which includes programs in criminal justice, economics and management, education, health sciences, movement science, sport and leisure studies, nursing, and social work.

The college is home to the largest diversity of accredited programs and student enrollment. Dr. Mills in the last year has also served as chair of the University Efficiency Analysis Advisory Committee (UEAAC).

Those who have worked with Dr. Mills as a dean and UEAAC chair have recognized her unmistakable skills and talents as a highly organized, forward-thinking, consensus-building, and solutions-focused leader.

Beyond Westfield State, she was recently appointed to the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), the regional accreditation agency for New England colleges and universities, where she contributes to the accreditation evaluation of member institutions.

Her intimate knowledge and experience with University-wide and program-specific accreditation will provide unique benefit when – as provost – she will direct WSU's own NECHE accreditation process. This process usually takes two years to complete.

Dean Mill's experience guiding the UEAAC research and ensuing implementation will be of immeasurable assistance to the new president in pursuing a healthy future for WSU in all areas.

In addition to Dean Mill's professional qualifications, I'd like to include a little personal background because it relates to the very effective person you have already come to know in leading the University Efficiency Analysis Advisory Committee, UEAAC.

Dr. Mills is a very caring and empathetic person, which brings strength to her leadership, including the ability to successfully negotiate group dynamics and maintain focus on complex tasks. She brings many different points of view because of her diverse experiences.

In her early years of growing up in Jamaica, Juline attended grade school where half of the student body was made up of students who had various challenges. This class composition was designed for a specific purpose. Students learned empathy and responsibility to take care of each other and communicate sensitively. At 17 years old she participated as an exchange student at Iowa State University, in Ames, Iowa – her first introduction to U.S. Higher Education.

She went on to receive her Bachelor of Science degree at the University of the West Indies in Jamaica. At the University of North Texas she earned two Master's degrees, one in computer education and cognitive systems and another in hospitality management. She earned a Ph.D. in hospitality and tourism management from Purdue University with an emphasis on ebusiness and statistics.

Prior to her arrival at Westfield State, Dr. Mills was a professor in the College of Business at the University of New Haven, Connecticut, where she also served as chair of the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management. She was chair and vice chair of the faculty senate, and received the Faculty Excellence in Experiential Education Award.

Dr. Mills has also taught at the University of Delaware and Purdue University, where she received the annual Bruce Lazarus Outstanding Teaching Award.

Collaborating on 100+ scholarly works, her research into service sector technology applications and hospitality and tourism management has been widely presented and published.

Juline's philosophy is to always expect people to do the right thing because it is the right thing to do. She is honest, kind, thoughtful, generous, organized, and a skilled leader.

I am honored to nominate and present Dean Juline Mills to you as the ideal candidate for this position. She is uniquely informed and qualified to serve Westfield State University in this capacity.

Pending your approval, I look forward to welcoming Dr. Mills to the University's executive leadership team on May 17, 2021.

Thank you.