



Board of Trustees

Audit Committee

February 20, 2025

Minutes

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM

Owl's Nest, Ely Campus Center

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

Committee Members Present: Vice Chair William Reichelt, Secretary Michael O'Rourke, Members: Tessa Lucey.

Participating Remotely: Committee Chair Theresa Jasmin

Members Excused: Trustees Melissa Alvarado and Dr. Gloria Williams

Also present were Westfield State University President, Dr. Linda Thompson; Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. William Salka; Special Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff, Dr. Michael Freeman; Vice President for Administration and Finance, Stephen Taksar; Vice President of Institutional Advancement, Lisa McMahan; Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Dr. Kevin Hearn; Director of Athletics, Richard Lenfest; General Counsel, Melinda Phelps; Assistant Vice President for Information and Instructional Technology, Alan Blair; and Associate Provost, Brian Jennings. Participating was Kate Jun and Ryan Sheehan of WithumSmith and Brown P.C.

Committee Chair Theresa Jasmin called the meeting to order at 8:38 a.m., conducted a roll call of committee members, and stated the meeting was being livestreamed and recorded.

MOTION made by Trustee Reichelt second by Trustee O'Rourke to approve the meeting minutes of December 9, 2024. A roll call was completed. **Motion passed.**

Uniform Guidance Report

Kate Jun and Ryan Sheehan from WithumSmith and Brown P.C. reported the following;

- There are two parts to every audit: the financial statement audit and the single audit.
- Any entity that gets over \$750,000 in federal aid also has a single audit component to it.

Single Audit

- Westfield State University will always have a single audit because of the large student population and amount of aid given out.
- Within the single audit requirements, auditors have to look at 20% of total CEFA expenses.
- Student financial aid awards are nearly always examined every year.
- Auditors also look at other programs that are less than the \$750,000 mark

Schedule of Federal Expenditures

- Student financial aid makes up nearly 95% of total expenses for the year.

- Risk assessment included looking at the post-secondary education program.
- Audit procedures include checking student awards, eligibility, and school processing.
- A finding was noted: one student's change in status was reported at 61 days instead of within 60 days.
 - "These are not uncommon. It's actually more uncommon to not have any findings which we haven't had on Westfield the last two years."
 - "There is no materiality. It's compliance testing. I mean one day it's in the grand scheme of things, it really didn't change anything."

NSLDS Submission Finding

- The student wasn't shortchanged as far as the amount of awards that they received.
- The finding is a reporting tool for when the student is required to start paying back their loans because of the six-month grace period.
 - Schools are required to report status changes in 60 days.
- Management will enhance their review procedures and use a target date of 50 days instead of 60.
- The finding doesn't impact the financial statements.
 - "It is very common that schools have at least one finding and the NSLDS submission is the most common out of all the findings."

MOTION made by Trustee O'Rourke seconded by Trustee Lucey, the Audit Committee recommends approval to the full Board: 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, 2024, as prepared by the firm of WithumSmith and Brown 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. A roll call was completed. **Motion passed.**

Release of Student Directory Information Policy (0290)

- The review of university policies was charged to General Counsel Melinda Phelps by the Chair and President Thompson in September.
 - The goal is to update policies, check statutory references, and ensure changes are accounted for.
- The first policy presented is the student directory information under FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974).
 - FERPA protects students' education records as a private matter.
 - FERPA applies to K-12, making educational records confidential to the parent of the minor child.
 - FERPA provides exceptions to the privacy right, including directory information.
- Institutions can define what records are released to a third party without student consent.
- FERPA provides a list (student name, photo, DOB, etc.) for institutions to choose from as directory information.
- Policy 0290 includes every option FERPA provides, which is considered too broad, especially regarding student photos.
- The proposal is to rescind 0290 and allow the President and Registrar to reformulate the definition of directory information, with student input via the Registrar's office. Students can opt out.

MOTION made by Trustee Lucey seconded by Trustee O'Rourke The Audit Committee recommends approval to the full Board: To rescind the Release of Student Directory information Policy #0290 and refer the administrative matter to the President and the Registrar. A roll call was completed. **Motion passed.**

Internal Audit Update

- Internal audit is about a month behind schedule due to staffing issues but are resuming work, including interviews and on-site inspections and will also review policies, controls, and procedures.
- The security audit is about halfway done.
- Accounts payable audit will start as soon as the security audit is finished, possibly drifting into the nexus security audit.
- Testing is still ongoing with an "April ish timeframe" for past recommendations.
- Internal audits are in their second year, focusing on policies, procedures, compliance, and best practices.

There being no further business, **MOTION** made by Trustee Reichelt and seconded by Trustee O'Rourke to adjourn the meeting. There being no discussion, **motion passed unanimously**. Meeting adjourned at 8:55 a.m.

Attachment(s):

- a. Minutes 12-9-24 (Draft)
- b. Motion – Uniform Guidance Report
- c. Uniform Guidance Report (Draft)
- d. Motion – Release of Student Directory Information Policy (0290)
- e. Policy – Release of Student Directory Information (0290)

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, Audit Committee meeting held on February 20, 2025.

Michael O'Rourke, Secretary

Date