



**Board of Trustees**  
**Advancement, Marketing, and External Relations Committee**  
**Minutes**

December 18, 2025, 1:15 p.m.

Loughman Living Room, Scanlon Hall

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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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Committee Chair Dr. Gloria Williams, Vice Chair Chris Montemayor, Secretary Barney Garcia, Trustee Michael O'Rourke, and Board Chair Ali Salehi, ex-officio member

**MEMBERS PRESENT REMOTELY:** Trustee Jason Queenin

Also present and participating were Westfield State University President, Dr. Linda Thompson, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Lisa McMahan and Kathy Howrigan of Howrigan Consulting.

The meeting was called to order at 1:15 p.m. by Committee Chair Dr. Gloria Williams and it was announced that the meeting was being livestreamed and recorded.

**MOTION** made by Trustee O'Rourke, seconded by Trustee Montemayor to approve the minutes from the October 21, 2025, meetings. There being no discussion, a roll call was conducted, and the **Motion passed.**

**Fundraising/Engagement/Alumni/Metrics**

Metrics Report (as of 12/15/2025)

- Strong trajectory with continued year-over-year increases.
- 68% increase in gifts and grants, bringing the total to over \$2 million.
  - Majority of the \$2 million comes from grants.
  - Fall appeal saw 37% growth.
  - Total ESR ahead by \$71,000 with 598 donors, 258 of whom are alumni.

Grants Table

- In FY24, a director of corporate and foundation grants was hired.
- In FY25, closed two grants totaling \$85,000.
- In FY26, secured over \$1.9 million, projected to exceed \$2 million.
- Return on investment of the position is significant.
  - \$1.9 million came into the foundation, except for \$453,000 for math and life science, which went directly to the university.

## **President Linda Thompson's Scholarship for Student Access and Success**

- \$1 million was raised with the help of supporters.
- Surpassed the million-dollar mark for the President Linda Thompson Scholarship for student success and access.
  - Scholarship aims to remove barriers and empower students.
  - Supports experiential learning opportunities.

## **Campaign Framework and Budget Proposal**

### Upcoming Campaign: "Together We Soar"

- Three goals:
  - Provide background on past and recent work to assess philanthropic capacity and readiness.
  - Review findings and recommendations from the planning study.
  - Outline next steps and what the board needs to affirm.
- Goal: Clarity on what is needed to pursue the campaign and decisions to position Westfield State well.

### Kathy Howrigan's Presentation

- Comprehensive inputs for recommendations included:
  - Deep dive into previous giving and prospect data.
  - Interviews with stakeholders.
  - Assessment of staff capacity and internal mechanisms.
  - Modeling of potential revenue during a campaign.

### Interview Findings

- General positive sentiment about Westfield State.
  - "It's time. People are waiting to be asked."
- Confidence in the President's leadership is a key indicator of success.
- Desire for more clarity and sharper focus on fundraising priorities.
- Expectation of disciplined and consistent execution.
- Desire for clearer metrics and impact.

### Readiness and Capacity

- There's confidence that Westfield State can be ready for fundraising initiatives, but concerns exist about the capacity to follow through with ideas and shifting priorities.
- There is a call for stronger advancement infrastructure, in particular deeper depth in terms of having capacity to go out and cultivate those six and seven figure gifts.
- Many folks would love to be more involved and are eager to be more involved and maybe looking for more clarity about how they can effectively help the organization move forward.

### Fundraising Potential

- The database contains a lot of money.
- Using conservative methodology, it's estimated that about 2% of the total capacity could be captured, amounting to around \$20 million.
- This figure only accounts for individual households and excludes grants, corporate support, and planned gifts.
- The capacity is concentrated among a relatively small number of high-capacity households.

### Prospect Analysis

- There are about 550 prospects that are either highly or moderately likely to make a major gift.
- There are a lot of prospects that are already cultivated below the million dollar level.
- There is a challenge above the million dollar level in terms of mathematical exercise.

- To run a campaign, it's necessary to cultivate more people than gifts received, needing to cultivate 850 relationships.

#### Donor Relations Program

- To support the campaign, the donor relations program needs to work.
  - A gift officer should be building relationships.
  - Someone in-house should write proposals, handle communications, and steward donors.

#### Recommendations

- Pursue a \$25 to \$30 million campaign over five to seven years.
  - Target at least \$20 million from individual major gifts.
  - Additional support from businesses, planned gifts, and grants is expected.
- The Health and Human Development Building should be the anchor project.

#### Health and Human Development Building

- Aligns with workforce development and demand.
- It can house different programs and integrated clinical health services.
- It is not only for STEM majors, but also for innovative general-purpose spaces for the entire student body, faculty, and staff.
- Offers compelling seven-figure naming opportunities.
- Provides a tangible centerpiece for the campaign's quiet phase.

#### Campaign Phasing

- First 6-12 months:
  - Hire a campaign director to operationalize and finalize plans.
  - Build collateral and detail around the building.
  - Optimize portfolios.
  - Strengthen the system.
- Quiet Phase:
  - Focused conversations with the president, VP, leaders, and top prospects.
  - Begin working with leadership volunteer structure.
- Public Phase:
  - Engage alumni and the broader community.
  - Continue functional organizational structure.

#### Organizational Structure

- President: Chief external champion, leads top-tier relationships.
- Vice President for Institutional Advancement: Strategic lead for the campaign and principal gift partner with the president.
- Executive Director: Player-coach for major gift officers and stewardship.
- Campaign Director: Operational lead, go-to person for project status, metrics, prospects, and gift table.

#### Campaign Budget

- Total campaign budget: \$3.8 million over five years.
  - Staffing: \$2.5 million.
  - Programs and operations: \$1.2 to \$1.3 million.
- The Foundation is funding the campaign director position.
- Recommended investment from the university: \$3.1 million.

#### Risks of Deferred Investment

- Unrealized major gift potential.
- Slower fundraising.
- Difficulty securing million-dollar gifts.

- Risk of losing donor interest in the building.
- The team will continue to work hard and continue to grow fundraising like it has been, but with less tools than they currently have.

#### Prospectus and Regional Impact

- The prospectus is broad and doesn't specify a fundraising target due to the new Vice President, Provost, Deans, and the building project.
- The third pillar of the prospectus focuses on regional impact in health and human development and community well-being, initially related to replacing gates.
- The BRIGHT Act presents opportunities for partnerships and community money to support health and human development in the region.

#### Healthcare Access and Opportunities

- There is a lack of primary care providers and facilities in the region, with about a million people west of Worcester potentially benefiting from increased services.
- Westfield State University could be a solution for healthcare challenges in the region, potentially partnering with Bay State Health.
- The university already provides services, such as allowing helicopters to land on its property for medical transport.
- Dr. Thompson believes Westfield State can step up and be a leader, differentiating itself from other universities.

#### Campaign Budget and Goals

- The Board is asked to affirm the direction and scale of the \$25 to \$30 million campaign and endorse a multi-year investment framework.
- The Board is not being asked to approve the final budget, but to commit up to \$3.1 million for the campaign budget, to be refined by the incoming VP of Institutional Advancement.
- The \$25 to \$30 million target is a starting point and one component of the building project.
- The University has the capacity to exceed this initial goal, especially with corporate and business partners.
- Salem State University started with a \$25 million campaign and eventually raised \$75 million.
- The previous campaign for Woodward raised \$2 million, while the current staff raises \$2.5 million over five years.

#### Campaign Structure and Potential

- The recommendations are structured around Westfield State University embarking on its first strategic visionary campaign.
- Board Chair Salehi believes that with the right investments, the university can raise \$20 million from individuals, possibly more with a structured approach, and even more from grants and other sources.

#### Importance of Leadership and Timing

- The University has suffered from a lack of steady leadership in the past.
- The current president has become the face of the University locally, statewide, and nationally.
- Board Chair Salehi believes that now is the right time to act and that it would be "short sighted" not to support the effort.

#### Staffing and Building Considerations

- There are concerns about staffing and bandwidth, especially with upcoming transitions.
- The new Vice President of Institutional Advancement should have experience in successful campaigns.

- Trustee Alvarado believes the building will cost over \$100 million, and state revenues may be available to cover a large portion of the cost.

#### Investment and Future Growth

- Investing up to \$3.1 million over five years from reserves is a wise decision to invest in the future.
- Buildings are attractive to philanthropists, and the new building can be the focal point of the capital campaign.
- The goal is not just to raise money but to build internal capacity and relationships for future campaigns.

#### Items for Action

**MOTION** made by Trustee Garcia, seconded by Trustee O'Rourke, The Advancement, Marketing, and External Relations Committee recommends approval to the full Board: To affirm the campaign direction and scale, and commit up to \$3.1 million for a multi-year (5+ years) campaign budget to be refined by the next Vice President of Institutional Advancement. There being no discussion, a roll call was conducted, **Motion passed unanimously.**

#### Tina Bones

- Over 35 years at Westfield State University, cornerstone of Human Resources.
- Started as payroll clerk, advanced to benefits manager.
- Provided support for faculty/staff, deep understanding of policies.
- Legacy defined by commitment to service and relationships.

#### Janet Garcia

- 20 years at Westfield State University, innovation and leadership.
- First director of marketing, laid foundation for brand identity.
- Strategic social media engagement, professional photography, and effective website.
- Two-time alum of Westfield State University.

**MOTION** made by Trustee Queenin, seconded by Trustee Montemayor, the Advancement, Marketing, and External Relations Committee recommends approval to the full Board: To approve the granting of staff emeriti status, effective December 18, 2025, to the following individuals: Louisa (Tina) Bonés and Janet Garcia. There being no discussion, a roll call was conducted, **Motion passed unanimously.**

No further discussion,

**MOTION** made by Trustee O'Rourke, seconded by Trustee Montemayor, to adjourn the meeting. There being no discussion, a roll call was conducted, **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 2:15 PM.

#### Attachments:

- Draft Minutes of October 21, 2025
- Advancement Additional PowerPoint Slides
- Howrigan Consulting PowerPoint
- Westfield State Campaign Planning Study Report

- e. Motion – Fundraising Campaign
- f. Motion – Staff Emeriti
- g. Staff Emeriti Biographies

**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 Advancement, Marketing, and External Affairs Committee meeting held on December 18, 2025.

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Barney Garcia, Secretary

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Date