



BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Enrollment Management & Student Affairs Committee
February 20, 2025
Minutes
12:45 – 1:45 PM
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>

MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Committee Chair William Reichelt
- Vice Chair Tessa Lucey
- Secretary Jason Queenin
- Trustee Daniel Currier
- Trustee George Gilmer

Also present and participating were;

- Westfield State University President, Dr. Linda Thompson
- Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Dr. Kevin Hearn
- Director of Admissions, Mike Mazeika
- Director of Career Center, Junior Delgado

Trustee Reichelt called the meeting to order at 12:45 PM. A roll call was taken of the Trustees participating as listed above and 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 December 9, 2024 meeting. There being no discussion, a roll call was conducted, **motion passed.**

Spring 2025 Review

- Dr. Hearn presented the spring 2025 undergraduate enrollment numbers.
- Enrollment goals were met for the third consecutive enrollment cycle, after 10 years of decline.
 - Target of 20 first-year students enrolled 26.
 - Target of 75 transfer students was met.
- 175% increase in completed applications for first-year students and a 108% increase for transfer students.
- The enrollment model will take into account admissions entry points and year-over-year retention data to build a three-year enrollment projection for budget purposes.
- Admissions criteria have not changed, and GPA expectations are being met.
- Retention initiatives are being re-examined, with academic performance as a primary indicator of success.
- Partnership with Holyoke Community College (HCC) through the Aspen Institute to serve transfer

students.

Fall Enrollment Preview

- A more aggressive goal of 857 first-year students has been set for the fall, a 22% increase over the last two years.
- There are decreases in inquiries and applications, but this is not a major concern due to a more strategic admissions approach.
- Deposits are up 75 year over year.
- Challenges include a large portion of deposits from families who have not filled out the FAFSA and concerns about data privacy.

Market Opportunities and Investments

- Need to capture back the market and be strategic about local options (Worcester, Fitchburg, Framingham).
- Need to invest in markets like they haven't been able to in many years.
- Doing better with the Hartford market, but there's still room for improvement.
- Growing East and South helps.

Current Efforts and Improvements

- Continued integration of the student information system.
- Texting is now used as a format of communication to students.
- Improving communications to both students and parents through a new newsletter.
- Continuing the development and improvement of campus programs.

Accepted Student Day Data

- First accepted student day is close to selling out with 220 registered out of a limit of 230.
- 180 registrants are from Massachusetts.
- Top inquiries: Criminal Justice (32), Education (28), Psychology (23), and Undeclared/Exploratory (20).

Initiatives to Improve Admissions:

- Working with Marcomm and Dr. Rice to redesign the University website.
 - 80% of prospective student audience comes through the website.
- Creating a series of digital assets for the University.
 - High-value video resources for deployment in various places, including campus events.
- Strategic focus on the value proposition and outcomes.
- Striving for exceptional customer service as a differentiator.
- Aiming to be a one-stop shop for inquiries.
- Training sessions for faculty members to help with accepted student days.

Enrollment Success

- The secret to enrollment success is retention.
- It is critical to retain current students before focusing solely on customer growth.
- The demographic cliff starts this fall.
- The University will be aggressive and unapologetic about the student experience.
- Will work aggressively to capture market share and talk large in secondary markets, building tertiary markets.
- The demographic study indicates a five-year decline, followed by a two-year growth period.

Opportunities for Growth

- Focus on graduate students and adult students needing additional education.

- Identify opportunities for new degrees or certificates and position the university as the best in class.
- Explore more fast-track programs where students can get an undergraduate and graduate degree simultaneously.
- Share and repost university activities on social media platforms.

Update on Strategic Enrollment Planning

- Establishing a Strategic Enrollment Planning Committee with membership from all divisions and departments.
- Committee will be chaired by administrators but staffed by faculty, staff, and students.
- Three subcommittees: undergraduate admissions, graduate admissions, and student retention.
- Responsible for the development and implementation of a three-year strategic plan.
 - Includes assessment and development of specific short-term and strategic long-term initiatives.
- The plan will be flexible and continuously updated.

Department Spotlight: Career Center

- Director of the Career Center, Junior Delgado has been at Westfield State University for almost 25 years and director for 16 years.
- The Career Center team includes Giselle Frechette, Dino Innarelli, Jennifer Dobiecki, Sharon Welch, Lori Putnam, Rachel Gelina, and student workers. The advisors have over 80 years of career development experience.

Career Center Outcomes

- A study showed that 58% of adults choose higher education for job and career outcomes.
- Career plays a significant role in retention.
- They have reached over 500 students this past year, met with over 1200 students, has about a 10% participation rate in career fairs and did 175 classroom visits impacting over 3,500 students.
- Most graduates find employment within six months.
- Securing full-time employment during graduate school is continually increasing.
- The postgraduate survey report is done for graduate classes each year.
- Team Connect shows administration page views, active users, and top community pages.
- Labor market insights provide students with real-time information on jobs, salaries, and skills.

Improving the Campus Career Ecosystem

- Create additional work-study opportunities to build experience for students.
- Work with faculty to highlight existing internship opportunities and create new ones.
- Use experiential learning opportunities to differentiate units.

Integrating Career Learning into the Student Life Cycle

- Continue engagement with admissions and orientation activities.
- Explore the feasibility of a Career Champions Network.
- Integrate the postgraduate survey.

Collaborative Efforts for Increased Response Rate

- The goal is to work collaboratively with departments to increase the postgraduate survey response rate.
 - The last graduating class had a 24% response rate.
 - Out of approximately 650 graduates, only 150 took the survey.
- Faculty relationships are valuable for reaching students.

Target and Invest in Employer Relationships

- Solicit new corporate partnerships to leverage relationships for support and funding.
 - This includes financial support, student visits, internships, and full-time jobs.
- Engage partners in the development of new programs and credentials.
 - Explore new credential certificates that align with the employer community.
 - The employer community has requested additional credentials outside of degrees.
- Forge is a company that partners with large U.S. corporations to produce courses that students can take self-paced.
 - The credential can be shared on their resume and LinkedIn profile.

Questions and Answers

- Postgraduate Survey:
 - The survey asks if graduates are securing employment in their major.
 - The postgraduate survey has been conducted for approximately 30 years.
- Employer Interactions:
 - Employers have expressed interest in programs the University doesn't offer.
 - Examples include actuarial science, logistics/supply chain management, and sales programs.
- Industry Needs and Opportunities:
 - There are many opportunities to work with industries, including internships.
 - Suggested programs include environmental health and safety and healthcare.
- Early College Programs:
 - The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is pushing for early college and professional development for young people.
- Sharing Information with Students:
 - It's important to share information about fields students may not know about.
 - Example: A manufacturer is looking for chemistry majors to mix dyes.
 - Educate students on the diverse opportunities within companies beyond their initial perceptions.

MOTION made by Trustee Currier, and seconded by Trustee Lucey, to adjourn. A roll call was completed, motion passed **unanimously**.

Meeting adjourned at 2:24 PM

Attachments:

- a. Minutes December 9, 2024
- b. EMSA Presentation PPT

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 meeting held on February 20, 2025.

Jason Queenin, Secretary

Date