



## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

### **Enrollment Management & Student Affairs Committee**

#### **Minutes**

October 21, 2025 11:15 PM

President's Boardroom, Horace Mann Center

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 William Reichelt
- Secretary Jason Queenin
- Trustee Barney Garcia
- Trustee George Gilmer

#### **MEMBERS PARTICIPATING REMOTELY:**

- Vice Chair Tessa Lucey

Also present and participating were;

- Westfield State University President, Dr. Linda Thompson
- Vice President of Enrollment Management, Marketing and Student Affairs, Dr. Kevin Hearn
- Senior Executive Director, Westfield Worldwide, Dan Forster
- Director of Student Activities, Involvement, and Leadership, Matt Dellea
- Director of Marketing, Alyssa Goodreau
- Director of Undergraduate Admissions, Michael Mazeika

Committee Chair William Reichelt called the meeting to order at 11:15 a.m. 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 Montemayor and seconded by Trustee Garcia, to approve the minutes of the June 11, 2025 meeting. There being no discussion, a roll call was conducted, **and motion passed.**

#### **Review of Orientation and Student Activities**

Director of Student Activities, Involvement, and Leadership (SAIL), Matt Dellea presented the following:

- Incredible demonstration of collaboration and coordination across campus.
- Move in, check in, and orientation kickoff flowed smoothly.
- Students and families experienced a true Westfield welcome.

#### **OWL Olympics**

- Signature team building event. Gave students the chance to meet new people, build

connections, and share school pride. Set the tone for the entire semester.

### Evening Programming

- Kept the fun and engagement going. Over 500 students participating in events each night during that first week. Community building activities continued with that same growth.
  - Helped new students feel comfortable exploring campus, making friends, and getting involved in campus programming right away.

### Tradition

- Fall orientation is the perfect time to introduce hallmark events. Annual glow party (5th year), paper airplane toss (2nd year at the Woodward center).

### Data

- 760 students attended at least one orientation session.
  - Increase of 63 students in 2024.
- Day three alone, 574 students attended, 226 more than last year.
- 88.7% of students reported making at least one new connection.
- 93% said that they know how to get involved on campus this fall.
- 87.8% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt they made the right choice in attending Westfield State University.

### September Momentum

- Introduction of Westfield State's first ever drone show.
  - Replaces fireworks with an innovative, sustainable and creative tradition.
  - Drew hundreds of attendees. "It was their first wow moment. A memory that ties them emotionally to Westfield State."
- Family Weekend 2025: 1200 participants.
  - Nearly double last year's attendance.

### Trainings

- Hosted three involve trainings that brought together 13 departments.
- Involved Platform:
  - 156 events were advertised.
  - 74 of those events have recorded attendance data on the platform.
- By the end of welcome Owls Week, 1,549 students had attended at least one event.
- By the end of September, that number grew to 1,773 students who had attended at least one event.

### Program Funding

- First-year student fee: Supports the First Year Student Center program and Welcome Owl's Week. Student activities fee: Funds the Campus Activities Board budget. University funding: Provided to student government.

### Diversity and Inclusion

- Concern raised about the lack of students of color in the presentation video.
- The University is aware and intentional in creating digital assets to represent diversity (socioeconomic, racial, etc.).
- Videos aim to include students from various backgrounds (athletes, theater students, introverts).

### **Enrollment Update**

- Early engagement helps with retention, especially in the first few weeks.
- The University is committed to core values of inclusion and belonging for all students.

### Fall 2025 New Student Admissions

- There was a slight increase in first-year deposits.
  - This is the first time in over a decade to have back-to-back years of increases.

- Despite a drop in applications overall, there was a higher percentage of completed applications.
  - The applications included about 100 international applications and 75 from California.
- The final deposit numbers were 838, with an increase in out-of-state students (14%).
  - In-state, Hampden County is the most popular area, followed by Worcester and Middlesex counties.
  - Connecticut continues to be the most populous out-of-state area, followed by New York. Increases were seen across all New England states.

#### Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Measuring success involves looking at the percentage of completed applications.
- Event KPIs are tracked to see the percentage of students attending events, who apply, and deposit.
- Data is tracked to see how many students are met at high school visits who are seniors and have not applied.
- Goals are set by a financial aid assessment that uses benchmark data.
- National Clearinghouse data will be used to see where students who completed applications but didn't come to Westfield went.

#### Enrollment and Recruitment Strategies

- Focus on local communities (Westfield, West Springfield) for recruitment.
  - Target athletic events, concerts, and summer camps to attract potential students.
- National level: Men are exceeding female ratios of non-starters (students not going to college).
- Acceptance rate is about 96%.
- Very small percentage of the class was international.
  - In the past, agencies were used overseas to target certain countries, but not anymore due to tuition and fees being too low for agency interest. Many international students are from Canada and are athletes. Actively looking at strategies to entice international students.
- Goal is enrollment stabilization and then growth.
- Holding the current number is considered growth due to declining high school graduation rates.
  - Graduation rates are down 2% this year, 2% next year, and 11% the following year.
- Replacing one international student financially takes two domestic students.
- Direct admissions are being used to make it easier for students to apply.

#### Budget and Yield

- Budget is based on 857 students.
- Yield is calculated based on deposits.
  - Calculated deposits = 838 number divided by the acceptance number.

#### Financial Aid and Competition

- Maximum presidential merit scholarship is only \$5,000.
- It is a very competitive market for every student.
- Other universities offer any family under \$150,000 can go for free.

#### Transfer Students

- Saw a down year in transfers.
- Fell short of the goal of 226 students.
- Saw a decrease from Holyoke Community College this past year.
- Transfer numbers are a reflection of a one person shop.
- Working to hire a new person to assist with transfers and improve transfer numbers.
- Need to improve articulations and communicate course transfer information faster.
- Transfer deposits went from 242 to 195.

- About 13 students decided to go part-time. This reflects the new community college enrollment, which includes non-traditional students.
- The University is doing well with "four by four transfers" (students from other four-year institutions). Some students are leaving their institutions and not going anywhere. This creates a competitive marketplace for transfer students.
- Quickness in transitioning curriculum and course credits is key to attracting transfer students.

#### Community Colleges

- The upcoming fall 2026 semester will be the initial barometer for the impact of two years of free community college in Massachusetts.
- The university will be looking at Clearinghouse data to see where transfer students went and if they stayed at their previous school.
- There is a discussion statewide about the 90-hour versus 120-hour requirement, which may negatively impact state universities.
- There is a slight uptick for transfer enrollment for the fall 2025/spring 2026 semester.

#### Graduate and Continuing Education (DGCE)

- The chart provides a year-over-year comparison to fall enrollment for new students.
- Headcount is flat for graduate programs and slightly down for undergraduate part-time and online programs.
- Spring enrollment is slightly up versus last year, but not enough to make up for the fall decrease.
- The majority of students come from feeder community colleges.
- The nursing co-enrollment program with HCC has grown from 17 to over 24 students.
- There is potential for a partner program with the social work program.

#### Marketing and Recruitment

- Assessing marketing efforts regarding digital social media, email, visitation, and on-campus recruitment to entice undergraduate Westfield State students to pursue graduate degrees.
- Recently completed a three-year strategic plan for DGCE admissions, aligning goals with program leads and the overall university strategic plan.

#### Enrollment Numbers

- Part-time undergraduate enrollment is down.
- Graduate programs have performed well in a competitive market with limited financial aid options (other than loans).
  - The most successful program for students with financial aid needs is graduate assistance, which they are trying to grow.
  - MSW has done well, partially due to a large online component.
  - MPA program had a significant increase from last year, reflecting numbers from two years prior.

#### Retention Data

- Goal is a 1% increase year over year in retention.
- ACT data shows similar institutions have first-year retention rates between 66% and 70%.
- Challenges to first-year student retention include psychosocial, transitional, and financial issues.
- The state benchmark for first-year student retention is 80%, which will be a "big hill to climb."
- Retention is the biggest challenge, and growth in retention is significant for the institution.

#### Data Interpretation

- The number of credits affects how students are classified (freshman, sophomore, junior).
  - Many first-year students arrive with college credit.
- Fall 24 first year retention rate of 70.2% means that 70.2% of students enrolled in fall 2024 were still enrolled in fall 2025.

- Retention data does not count graduations against them.
- Sophomore, junior, and senior classifications are based on credit bands, not necessarily years of attendance.
- Data is not tracked as an initial cohort, so there are different ways to slice the data.
- If a transfer student has 60 credits, they would come in as a sophomore.

### **Rebrand Updates**

- The brand is the perception people have of who we are, built from every experience and interaction.
- A logo is the visual symbol of the brand.
- A tagline is a short phrase that expresses our promise or essence in words.
- Jeff Bezos said, "A brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room."

### **Rebrand Progression with BVK**

- Fall 2023 to Spring 2025: Branding study with campus-wide surveys and development of brand platforms and logo identity.
- Summer 2025 to Fall 2025: Reevaluation of branding work, strategic changes to brand evaluation, and focus on outcomes-based messaging.
- Spring 2026: Launching and activating the new brand platform.

### **Refreshed Identity**

- Built around clarity, confidence, community, and successful student outcomes.
- Features portraits and voices of faculty, staff, and alumni.
- The new brand platform will include a cohesive visual identity system, consistent messaging and storytelling framework, and tools and templates.
- The goal is that when people see or hear Westfield State University, they immediately understand who they are and what they stand for.

### **New Brand Platform**

- The new brand platform coalesces with the strategic plan and any capital campaign.
- The goal is to coalesce as a university community around one brand that's outcome focused.
- 96% of graduates are working or in graduate school after commencement.

**MOTION** made by Trustee Gilmer, and seconded by Trustee Garcia, to adjourn. There being no discussion, **motion passed.**

Meeting adjourned at 12:41 p.m.

### **Attachments:**

- Minutes- June 11, 2025
- PowerPoint 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 Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Committee meeting held on October 21, 2025.

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Jason Queenin, Secretary

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Date