



## Board of Trustees

Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Committee

October 11, 2023

Minutes

President's Boardroom, Horace Mann Center

A live stream of the meeting for public viewing also took place on YouTube.

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Committee Chair William Reichelt, Vice Chair Dr. Robert Martin, and Trustees Daniel Currier, and Board Chair Ali Salehi, ex-officio member

**MEMBERS PARTICIPATING REMOTELY:** Trustee George Gilmer<sup>i</sup>

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Secretary Paul Boudreau

**TRUSTEE GUESTS PRESENT:** Trustees Madeline Landrau<sup>ii</sup>, Chris Montemayor, and Dr. Gloria Williams<sup>ii</sup>

**TRUSTEE GUESTS PARTICIPATING REMOTELY:** Trustee Melissa Alvarado

Also present and participating were Westfield State University President Dr. Linda Thompson and Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Vice President Dr. Kevin Hearn.

Committee Chair William Reichelt called the meeting to order at 8:30 and a roll call was taken of the committee members participating as listed above.

**MOTION** made by Trustee Martin, seconded by Trustee Currier, to approve the minutes of the June 6, 2023, meeting.

There being no discussion, **Motion passed unanimously** [Trustee Gilmer joined the meeting via Zoom after the vote].

VP Report, Initial Transition/First 8 Weeks. Dr. Hearn stated there is a national issue of significant enrollment declines due to the demographic cliff. He shared his goals and lessons, starting with stabilizing enrollment, focusing first on retention and then admissions. The focus will be on first year and transfer students. The Enrollment Management and Student Affairs division will be reorganized, building a culture of collaboration.

Enrollment Management Current Efforts.

- Residence Life is being rebuilt and is fully staffed for the first time in many years.
- Summaries were provided of first year and transfer student inquiries, applications, accepts, deposits, withdrawals, and melts.
- Fall 2023 admission events were shared.

- To establish whether goals have been met at the end of the academic year, the committee should look for:
  - Collaboration with the provost and a robust undergraduate funnel for first year and transfer students.
  - Whether the goal identified in the Strategic Enrollment Plan for the number of students registered before they leave for summer has been met.
  - Whether a clearer, more differentiated identity and brand has been created.

Accomplishing these goals requires a targeted, intense outreach using strategic investments and resources for the biggest payoff and creating an aggressive, competitive narrative that speaks to why our location, academic programs, general education, and outcomes (jobs) are better for families.

Student Affairs Current Efforts. There is more focus on the synergy and support of the Student Government Association (SGA). Training, planning, and execution of a comprehensive residence life program to include programs, operations, and retention is being created. Use of the existing campus-wide communication (NestWorks app) will be improved. A comprehensive plan for student engagement is being developed with increased programming and operational support for all sections of Student Affairs.

Development of a Strategic Enrollment Plan. After addressing findings from an admissions audit held in August, the new Strategic Enrollment Committee will draft a new admissions strategy and bring a draft Strategic Enrollment Plan to the Board in December. Information was shared on available students for admission in the commonwealth. First-year admissions funnel for 2018-2022 was reviewed with a conversion analysis scenario using fall 2022 first-time incoming freshmen. A model for a strong strategic enrollment planning structure was shared. When we find an area that we are better in than our peers – that is what we need to market.

Student Affairs Engagement. There needs to be increased collaboration with Institutional Research, the Office of JEDI, and other student life services outside the division. Students want a culture of traditions and getting involved. We need to leverage our existing diversity as a welcoming space to all potential students, creating support services for them that they can identify with. This is a great opportunity to reinvent ourselves and there is a deliberate effort to put students' diversity front and center at the redesigned open houses.

To improve culture, department staff will be challenged to take risks and make decisions, followed by celebration of accomplishments. The new fully staffed Institutional Research office will collect and break down data, and all divisions need to agree on using one data warehouse to make informed decisions.

Investments in financial aid need to be made now instead of December. The federal government is recreating the structure around financial aid and revising the FAFSA, but information surrounding the change will not be provided until the end of the year. The expected family contribution (EFC) is being replaced with a student aid index. A financial aid matrix can still be created, and merit awards need to be offered to stay competitive, before knowing the final changes. The key to navigating these changes is constant communication with students and families.

There being no further business,

**MOTION** made by Trustee Currier, seconded by Trustee Martin, to adjourn.

There being no discussion, **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:58 AM.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

- a. Draft Minutes of June 6, 2023
- b. PowerPoint Presentation

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<sup>i</sup> Trustee Gilmer joined via Zoom at 8:32 AM and entered the room at 8:44 AM

<sup>ii</sup> Trustee Landrau entered the room at 9:30 AM and Trustee Williams entered the room at 9:40 AM