



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Academic and Student Affairs Committee

December 16, 2021

Minutes

Conference Room A (Garden Level), 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 Dr. Gloria Williams, Vice Chair Madeline Landrau, Secretary Chloe Sanfacon, and Trustees William Reichelt, Lydia Martinez-Alvarez, and Dr. Robert Martin.

**TRUSTEE GUESTS PRESENT:** Trustees Paul Boudreau (joined at 9:49 AM), Kevin Queenin, and Ali Salehi

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

Dr. Linda Thompson, President of Westfield State University, was also present.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 AM by Committee Chair Williams and the committee members participating as listed above and that the meeting was being livestreamed and recorded was announced.

**MOTION** made by Trustee Martin, seconded by Trustee Landrau, to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2021, meeting. There being no discussion, **Motion passed unanimously.**

President's Remarks. President Thompson stated there are four new associate deans and they have joined the President's Council. Every president in the state system is discussing the issue of the mental health of students on campus. A bridge to the future promoting positive mental health for the entire campus community is being developed as well as a technology-based mental health system for students.

Standing Items. Academic and Student Affairs representatives Dr. Juline Mills, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Monique Lopez, Registrar, Dr. Brian Jennings, Dean of Assessment and Accreditation, and Ms. Margaret Balch, Dean of Students, jointly presented the following documents and information on five-year data points.

5 Yr. Registered Student Enrollment Undergraduate. This shows the breakdown between primary majors and the elevation of programs. The totals show enrollment of all students in the seats. There is a downward trend, but upticks in some programs. Some of the majors that have low enrollment are part of the general education courses that need to be offered. Increasing enrollment for those courses would require increased resources. Double majors do not increase revenue but do increase expenses. President Thompson noted that some of the university presidents have been discussing offering different courses from each other to share resources among the state universities and community colleges. [Trustee Boudreau entered the meeting at 9:49 AM] The figures show that 17 students are needed per class to break even and it was questioned whether we would offer a class for 1-4 students or instead send them elsewhere for that class or

charge extra fees. We have independent studies offerings; for vocational ed, students take classes at Fitchburg State and we offer the final degree. The campus academic master plan will help with the many metrics needed for these questions.

5 Yr. Registered Student Enrollment Graduate. There is an overall growth in graduate enrollment, with some programs increasing, some holding steady, and some declining. Some of the upward trajectory is due to new program development, which shows there is still a market in graduate education.

5 Yr. Seat Utilization Report Undergraduate Summary. There is a new process in place to manage and monitor schedules and reduce unused seats and programs. In 2021 there was a 5.35% unused seat utilization.

5 Yr. Utilization Report Undergraduate by Department. There was no discussion on this material.

5 Yr. Seat Utilization Report Graduate Summary. There was no discussion on this material.

5 Yr. Seat Utilization Report Graduate by Department. The same process is being used for graduate programs. There was a concern that with the reorganization of continuing education with no dean, someone needs to be paying attention to this. The director of graduate programs will work with the registrar on seat utilizations and the associate deans on program development.

It was requested that a one-page summary be provided in the future.

5 Yr. Academic Dismissal, Returning and Graduation Data (Undergraduate). These figures reflect online learning styles during COVID.

- When students return to campus, they are provided many resources to reacclimate to the institution. During COVID last year, we graduated over 1,000 students. A comprehensive definition of retention was started last year in the Office of Retention to provide greater detail of withdrawals. Starfish 360 is managed by the director of retention to offer services and early warning alerts for students, which needs to be part of the retention plan.
- The SGA is concerned about student mental health and it is sometimes the reason for students leaving. The LifeWorks app will support students with the opportunity to connect immediately with a therapist 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. It has the feature to chat with a therapist immediately if having an anxiety attack. The cost is \$25,000 for six months and will start in January. The more state schools using the program will result in a higher reduction in the price. The cost will be \$50,000 for the next fiscal year. An outreach coordinator started in September, holding case management team talks each week about struggling students.
- Retention is critical since the students are already here in our system. It would be helpful to see retention metrics like the enrollment funnel on a regular basis. Student withdrawals consist of an average 10% first-year loss, 40 military leave students, 30 medical leave students, and voluntary withdrawal of approximately 200 students per semester for a variety of reasons such as mental health, family situations, or finances.
- A mobile app with a single sign on for services across campus will be launched in the fall. Students will help with the content being posted. Other state universities using the app see 96% of students logging on daily.

Spring 2022 Registration in progress data. Updated registration data as of December 15 was distributed at the meeting.

Academic Affairs Reorganization Update: New Organizational Chart. New organizational charts were reviewed for the division of Academic Affairs. Filling vacant positions needs to be looked at in a systematic way, and the Board should be kept informed. [Trustee Martinez-Alvarez left the meeting at 10:49 AM]

Additional Data Requests. Student diversity data will be presented at the next meeting and performance metrics will start to be studied. It was requested to add faculty loads or credit hour generation as useful data points.

Faculty Emeritus/a. Faculty emeritus/a status is a rank of honor and recognition. To be eligible, faculty or librarians must have a minimum of ten years of full-time service at the University, be retired or resigned from full-time service, and not currently employed at any other college, school, or university. They must have demonstrated substantive, sustained achievement in their careers in one or more of the following: teaching, advising, scholarship, and professional service to the University, community, and/or the discipline.

**MOTION** made by Trustee Reichelt, seconded by Trustee Sanfacon, to approve the granting of Faculty Emeritus/a status, effective December 16, 2021 to the following individuals:

Dr. Robert Bristow, Department of Geography, Planning & Sustainability  
Dr. James Carabetta, Department of Computer and Information Science  
Dr. John Jones, Department of Criminal Justice  
Dr. Robert Kersting, Department of Social Work  
Dr. Karl Leiker, Department of Geography, Planning & Sustainability  
Dr. Nomazengele Mangaliso, Department of Sociology  
Dr. James Martin-Rehrmann, Department of Education  
Dr. Patrick Romano, Department of Chemical & Physical Science  
Mr. Gerald Tetrault, Department of Philosophy [Changed clerical error from Dr. to Mr.]  
Dr. Roger Tudor, Department of Philosophy  
There being no discussion, **Motion passed unanimously.**

There being no further business, **MOTION** made by Trustee Landrau, seconded by Trustee Reichelt, to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:58 AM.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

- a. Minutes, 10/13/21 (Draft)
- b. 5 Yr. Registered Student Enrollment Undergraduate
- c. 5 Yr. Registered Student Enrollment Graduate
- d. 5 Yr. Seat Utilization Report Undergraduate Summary
- e. 5 Yr. Utilization Report Undergraduate by Department
- f. 5 Yr. Seat Utilization Report Graduate Summary
- g. 5 Yr. Seat Utilization Report Graduate by Department
- h. 5 Yr. Academic Dismissal, Returning and Graduation Data (Undergraduate)
- i. Spring 2022 Registration in progress data
- j. Academic Affairs Organizational chart
- k. Motion: Faculty Emeritus/a Status
- l. Faculty Emeritus/a Justifications