



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes
October 13, 2021
Minutes

Owl's Nest (Room 018), Ely Campus Center

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Dr. Robert Martin, Vice Chair Ali Salehi, Secretary Lydia Martinez-Alvarez and Trustees Paul Boudreau, Theresa Jasmin, Madeline Landrau, Kevin Queenin, William Reichelt, Chloe Sanfacon, and Dr. Gloria Williams

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Trustee Melissa Alvarado

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

The meeting was called to order at 2:01 PM by Chair Martin who extended an invitation to members of the University community to join the Board at their committee meetings where discussions are full and informative. He reminded Trustees of their obligation to complete the DHE mandated training, Title IX, and Information Security training. He also encouraged Trustees to attend the DHE sponsored virtual trustee conference on October 27 where the DHE Equity Agenda will be discussed.

A roll call was taken of the Board members participating as listed above and it was announced that the meeting was being livestreamed and captured as recorded.

The September 15 minutes will be approved at the November meeting. **MOTION** made by Trustee Reichelt, seconded by Trustee Salehi, to approve the minutes of the June 29, 2021 meeting. There being no discussion, **Motion passed unanimously.**

MOTION made by Trustee Salehi, seconded by Trustee Martinez-Alvarez, to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2021 meeting. There being no discussion, **Motion passed unanimously.**

President's Report. Dr. Linda Thompson stated she completed her 100th day on Friday. She has met with over 50 business and community leaders and six sitting presidents of universities and community colleges as part of her listening tour and is excited about the reception she has received from the community. She is working more closely with business and the community to support growth in their industries. Health care leaders are interested in expanding their work and we have been offered the opportunity to do a clinic at Noble Hospital to provide more community outreach and assist in managing health and engagement to reduce complications from chronic disease. She has been working with Western New England University to create a relationship and explore linking our nursing program with their pharmacy school. She is working on a pathway to the University from Springfield, Holyoke and Berkshire Community Colleges to meet the BHE recommendations to expand relationships with high schools and community colleges. She met with the Student Government

Association (SGA) and their executive council and held a town hall with student leadership. She met with the Black Student Union to assure them we have a zero tolerance for any type of racism and civility issues. A town hall was held with all faculty and staff and she is offering weekly open office hours. A consultant has been secured to assist with best practices to focus on enrollment strategies. She has been engaged with a company to assist with external grants to help expand resources. She will be connecting with alumni, students, and friends of campus at homecoming. The University will be hosting the Westfield mayoral debate in coordination with *The Republican* on October 20 in Scanlon Hall. She intends to develop more strategic partnerships to grow enrollment and do more with public school systems in this region. President Thompson stated the SGA and Black Student Union met to debrief and met with Father Warren Savage following two racial incidents on campus. Students were positive with the immediate response to the incidents. Student leaders on campus are concerned with diversity, inclusion, and equity. Father Savage has taken some students under his wing to help teach them some skills. The plan is to act quickly, investigate, and rally around students with support.

Student Trustee Report. Trustee Chloe Sanfacon stated mid-terms are coming and registration for spring classes takes place from October 21 to 29. There was an academic advising day at Scanlon Hall yesterday, which went well. Housing selection will take place at the end of November. Finals begin on the date of the December Board meeting. Students are concerned with racial incidents and online bullying on campus, including the use of Yik Yak, a cell phone app which allows anonymous postings within a three-mile radius. The SGA executive board sent a no tolerance memo to students to combat bullying when they see it. They are also investigating diversity training for students. Initiatives for this semester include advocating for gender inclusive bathrooms in all buildings and changing the Banner system to include preferred names instead of legal names. The SGA and certain clubs are researching how to invest in using green energy on campus and will bring a proposal to the University. Chair Martin thanked President Thompson and Trustee Sanfacon for mentioning the bias and bullying incidents on campus and stated that those types of actions are antithetical to everything that an academic institution should be. He is glad the SGA is responding to them and connecting with the president, cabinet and other student groups. He spoke on behalf of the entire Board in articulating their full, complete, and wholehearted support for activities which say no to those kinds of incidents, whether they come from students, staff, or faculty.

Fall 2021/COVID-19 Update. This report will be sent to Trustees after the meeting due to a pressing issue that needed to be addressed today.

University Efficiency Analysis Advisory Committee (UEAAC) Update. Dr. Juline Mills, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, shared an update on the UEAAC recommendations and stated that a charge for UEAAC 3.0 is being developed. A process is being created for the restructure of Academic Affairs and the 16 nominations for associate deans, which is being discussed with department chairs. Recommendations 3A and 3B were completed in the spring. Recommendation 4 has been completed and an IT advisory committee approved by UEAAC needs to be established. For recommendation 5, a search will start in November for a Chief Diversity Officer. Recommendation 17 to create an Office of Strategic Finance and Institutional Planning has been completed and a Director of Institutional Planning and Financial Analyst will be hired. The consultant's work has been completed on the Human Resources realignment and revisions to the organizational chart. Recommendations 7, 8, 9, and 13 connect to managing a structure related to enrollments, with 1,500 to 1,600 first time, first year students as a goal. UEAAC 3.0 is focused this year in tandem with the goals of the institution and how to help with enrollment, retention, brand image, and revenue (Recommendations 10, 11, 12, and 21).

Chair Martin stated that a process for the Board's role in reviewing and measuring UEAAC recommendations had been drafted and that Trustees should review the provided document and share feedback with the Board's assistant. Provost Mills, Vice President Taksar, and President Thompson have had an opportunity for

input. At an upcoming meeting, it will be discussed and the process finalized for the Board's receipt and review of UEAAC recommendations and the creation of standard measurement processes to follow through implementation. It will also provide the campus community with an understanding of the Board's role and approach in reviewing the recommendations. After a discussion between Provost Mills, Vice President Taksar, President Thompson and Trustee representatives, UEAAC leadership will solicit feedback from members of the campus community. It was suggested that a dashboard could provide a condensed, accurate summary of the recommendations by providing validation and the scale of what is affected so that the Board could do its due diligence while allowing the campus to operate efficiently. [Trustee Reichelt left the meeting at 2:49 and returned at 2:51 PM.] Managing 21 recommendations is difficult and this semester will focus on only four recommendations to execute and implement faster (Recommendations 10, 11, 12, and 21).

Student Recognition. Mr. Richard Lenfest, Director of Athletics, recognized outstanding student athletes Amy O'Sullivan in cross country, a senior math and economic major, and Delaney Parker in soccer, a freshman athletic training major. He also shared that our athletes collaborated with Special Olympics and coordinated and ran a flag football game for them. He stressed the importance of students giving back, in addition to being successful in athletics and the classroom.

Advancement and Enrollment Management Committee. Committee Chair Lydia Martinez-Alvarez stated that at the committee meeting they received an update on fall enrollments and new engagement efforts with over 300 students and families attending information sessions. A Community Advisory Board is being renewed and updated to provide input on what the community would like to see at the University and provide new ideas on how to help WSU to be a leader in the state. The *Take a Seat* campaign has sold 31 of 400 seats and has received a \$100,000 grant toward the \$200,000 campaign. It was suggested to create a competition in the campaign between the Board of Trustees and Foundation Board. An update of activities in the Advancement office was shared, including the Distinguished Alumni Award on Saturday being presented to Hon. Bud Williams. Appreciation was expressed for Dr. Erica Broman's work as Vice President for Institutional Advancement and Lisa McMahon was welcomed in that role as Interim Vice President.

Academic and Student Affairs Committee. Committee Chair Dr. Gloria Williams stated that at the committee meeting they received updates from Academic Affairs on tutoring, early access initiatives, and retaining students. Academic Affairs restructuring and the Campus Academic Master Plan (CAMP) with defined goals were shared. Accessibility and support for immigrant students was discussed. A chart showing how the UEAAC recommendations, Strategic Plan, and CAMP complement each other will be brought to the December meeting. Student Affairs gave a presentation of how the division is providing social activities and support to students.

Finance and Capital Assets Committee. Committee Chair Ali Salehi stated that at the committee meeting they discussed the FY22 budget, which, through cost savings, reduced the provisional budget deficit of \$3.1 million to \$2.8 million. Enrollment is declining, but is still within target. CGCE is on target. The University is facing challenges with product delivery issues, energy costs, and labor needs. There was a one-time savings from the MSCBA partially refunding outstanding bonds. Dining Services and Residential Life revenues have increased but we still need to look at every possible option to enhance revenues. Required reporting of the president and senior administration travel expenses (zero for last year) and inventory reporting tracking at 97% of fixed assets was reviewed.

MOTION made by Trustee Salehi, seconded by Trustee Reichelt, to approve the FY22 Operating Budget as presented and to authorize the President to make budget adjustments to these funds.

Discussion: Vice President Taksar stated a budget was being presented with a structural deficit of \$2.8 million and additional work is needed to identify temporary and permanent savings.

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

Audit Committee. Committee Chair Paul Boudreau stated that at the committee meeting it was shared that the financial aid compliance audit finding from the previous year was resolved and no further action needed. The state audit report was presented with the new internal procedures that have been implemented and the state has closed the matter. Representatives from O'Connor and Drew presented the FY21 audit report with no material weaknesses. It was reviewed and fully vetted with the committee. The internal audit/risk compliance officer position has not been filled due to financial challenges and finding applicants. It is hoped to be filled at a later date. We are currently relying on the auditors, who review everything we do, to report to the committee anything they find that is irregular.

MOTION made by Trustee Reichelt, seconded by Trustee Salehi, to accept the annual report for fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, as prepared by the university's Administration and Finance Division and to authorize the submission of this report to the State Comptroller's Office, the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, and the State Auditor's Office, as required by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. This annual report includes the Westfield State University FY21 Financial Statements, audited by O'Connor & Drew, P.C. There being no discussion, **Motion passed unanimously.**

Chair Martin stated that the Governance and Nomination Committee did not meet today, but at the June 29 meeting the committee reviewed a Board self-assessment, constituting the first phase of reviewing how it operates. The next phase is to solicit feedback on Board function from the wider community. The committee will also work with the NECHE steering committee to focus on the role of the Board in institutional governance. Trustees Jasmin and Salehi are serving as liaisons to other NECHE committees. The committee will also be reviewing the Trustee Bylaws to establish whether our operational procedures are consistent with other institutions in terms of how we operate and the purview of what the Board is and should undertake. The upcoming discussion about creating an operational document for the Board to review and measure UEAAC will help define what the Board is responsible for. The Board is committed to transparency in that process so will be inviting feedback from members of the campus community.

The next meeting will be November 30 from 7:00 to 9:00 PM on Zoom. In the bi-monthly two-hour meetings, the focus of a singular topic will not be operational with an anticipation of outcome, but more strategic and forward looking. If the Board has ideas for particular topics, for example enrollment, program development, or NECHE, let Chair Martin or Jean Beal know and it will be discussed with President Thompson. It was suggested to have the SGA come to a meeting to discuss issues with the Board.

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

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

- a. Draft Minutes of June 29, 2021
- b. Draft Minutes of August 25, 2021
- c. UEAAC Recommendation Update
- d. Proposed Measurement Processes for UEACC Recommendations

Finance and Capital Assets Committee:

- e. Motion – FY22 Operating Budget
- f. FY22 Operating Budget (Narrative)
- g. FY22 Operating Budget (Final Budget)
- h. FY22 Operating Budget (Capital Projects)
- i. FY22 Operating Budget (Vehicle Lease, Purchase Program)
- j. FY22 Operating Budget (CGCE Narrative)
- k. FY22 Operating Budget (CGCE Narrative) Non-Credit

Audit Committee:

- l. Motion – FY21 Audit Report
- m. FY21 Audit Report (Required Communication)
- n. FY21 Audit Report (Draft)