



Board of Trustees

Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee

June 13, 2023

Minutes

Tilia Fantasia Student Lounge, Woodward Center

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Committee Chair Madeline Landrau, Vice Chair Chris Montemayor, Secretary Melissa Alvarado, Trustees George Gilmer, Dr. Gloria Williams, and Board Chair Dr. Robert Martin, ex-officio member

TRUSTEE GUESTS PRESENT: Trustees Theresa Jasmin, William Reichelt, and Ali Salehi

Also present and participating were Westfield State University President Dr. Linda Thompson, Vice President for Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, Dr. LaRue Pierce, and Registrar Dr. Monique Lopez.

The meeting was called to order at 10:13 AM by Committee Chair Landrau.

MOTION made by Trustee Montemayor, seconded by Trustee Gilmer, to approve the minutes of the April 25, 2023, meeting. There being no discussion, **Motion passed unanimously.**

Committee Chair Landrau welcomed Dr. Pierce, who shared an Anti-DEI legislative movement infographic. Discussion took place on legislation around the country that will affect enrollment and growth at the University. Dr. Pierce will find out how many proposed legislations are in Massachusetts.

- Some suggested legislation will affect international students' entrance into and length of time they are able to stay in the country. Some universities are exploring different ways to teach international students by teaching in their native countries or utilizing remote classes.
- We want to be an institution where students can study without constraints.
- The governor has asked each university to secure a student to sit on an advisory board surrounding the recent Supreme Court decision on affirmative action.

Dr. Pierce provided information on what the institution needs to do going forward surrounding justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion and issues faced during the 2022-2023 academic year.

Bias Education Support Team (BEST). Accountability happens through this team that supports and educates. To stop behavior, accountability must be clear and concise throughout the entire campus and needs communication from top down. The Faculty/Staff JEDI Advisory Committee has been approved and will create a diversity plan in the fall and record data on incidents for 2023-2024.

Trustees requested regular updates on issues and initiatives being developed collaboratively. The BEST team will create a dashboard to keep the community informed. Human Resources does have a report that lists every incident over the last 18 months. It was requested that HR provide a report of quantitative numbers, themes, and outcomes (resolved/pending) of those incidents.

Dr. Pierce stated that the Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action plan is outdated, but we need to follow this as the University's policies tie to it. He will work with BEST and the Faculty/Staff JEDI Advisory Committee to establish new policies.

Trustee Gilmer requested that Trustees be shown the whole programmatic side of how the following is being addressed:

- Training – do students, faculty and staff know what is expected?
- Alerting the University of any issues.
- Follow up mechanism – looks like BEST team will do this.
- Reporting to be able to understand the tone, how many incidents, and themes, which goes back into the programmatic training. Dr. Pierce has started a flow chart to capture this information to share.
- The University has zero tolerance for any type of discrimination.

Dr. Pierce shared that students will be trained in what freedom of speech is and what speech is protected. Many people do not know about the bias incident reporting form, which was utilized by 4-5 people last year. The BEST team will meet this summer to develop training that will start in the fall and educate the campus on the incident reporting form and then start collecting data. The timeline to roll out the entire program is the next 12 months.

Chair Martin suggested that at the beginning of the academic year might be the time for some letter or communication from President Thompson addressing these general national issues and why diversity in its many forms is important to the University and what we stand for. The board could consider being a signatory as well, making it clear where we stand as a University in terms of our commitment.

President Thompson stated that starting in September, the campus will have conversations around what it means to be a member of Westfield State and the principles of values and obligations to each other and working collaboratively to enhance the institution's culture.

Preferred and Chosen Name Committee. Dr. Lopez provided an update for this committee, stating a new policy reviewed by legal counsel will be brought to the board for approval in the fall. Software is being updated to provide the ability to assist students with their chosen name where allowed.

Approval of JEDI Committee Charter. Revisions to the charter were identified.

MOTION made by Trustee Montemayor, seconded by Trustee Williams, to approve and recommend adoption to the full Board the Westfield State University Charter of the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee, as presented. There being no discussion, **Motion passed unanimously.**

There being no further business,

MOTION made by Trustee Alvarado, seconded by Trustee Montemayor, to adjourn. There being no discussion, **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 11:03 AM.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

- a. Draft Minutes of April 25, 2023
- b. Anti-DEI Legislation Movement Infographic
- c. Presentation: Bias Education Support Team & Preferred and Chosen Name Committee
- d. Motion – Approval of JEDI Committee Charter
- e. Draft JEDI Committee Charter

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 Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee meeting held on June 13, 2023.

Melissa Alvarado, Secretary

Date