



Board of Trustees

Governance and Nomination Committee

April 22, 2025

9:00 AM

Minutes

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>

MEMBERS PRESENT: Committee Chair Melissa Alvarado, Vice Chair Theresa Jasmin, Secretary Tessa Lucey, and Trustees Chris Montemayor, Michael O'Rourke, and Board Chair Ali Salehi, ex-officio member.

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING REMOTELY: Trustee William Reichelt

Also present and participating were Westfield State University President, Dr. Linda Thompson, and Special Assistant to the President on University Strategies and Chief of Staff, Dr. Michael Freeman.

Committee Chair Alvarado called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM and a roll call was taken of the committee members participating as listed above. It was announced that the meeting was being livestreamed and recorded.

MOTION made by Trustee Jasmin, seconded by Trustee O'Rourke, to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2024 meeting. There being no discussion, and a roll call vote, **motion passed.**

Trustee Training

- Trustees are up-to-date with required training.
- Reminder of required training:
 - Full online training through the Department of Higher Education (DHE) within six months of appointment and every four years thereafter.
 - Curriculum of eight modules done online through Blackboard: Governance, State Finance, Conflicts of Interest, Public Records, Open Meeting Law, Procurement, Fraud Prevention, and Fiduciary Responsibilities.
 - KnowB4 trainings emailed to trustee emails throughout the year: FERPA, Waste Fraud and Abuse Ethics, Conflicts of Interest, and Security Awareness.
 - Annual Title IX training (November/December).
 - Annual Conflict of Interest Law training (due in February).

Upcoming Campus Wide Events

- Commencement is on Friday, May 16, 2025.
 - Undergraduate commencement is from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 - Graduate commencement is from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.
 - Food will be provided in between.
 - The event is at the MassMutual Center in downtown Springfield.
 - Board Chair Ali Salehi encourages everyone to attend, emphasizing that "this day is all about the students."
- Board retreat scheduled for Friday, August 8, 2025.
 - All day event and the agenda will be released closer to the date.
 - The Assistant to the Board of Trustees has sent out preliminary information.
- CURCA Spring celebration next Friday May 2, 2025 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Dower Center.
- Student Leadership Awards: Monday, May 5 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. in Scanlan Hall.
 - A good opportunity to see students who represent leadership skills.
- Nursing Pinning Ceremony: Wednesday, May 7, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. in Scanlon Hall.
 - A "heartwarming ceremony" where nurses get their pins.
- Next Board meeting is on June 11, 2025.

Association Governing Board (AGB) Conference Debrief

- AGB is a valuable resource for the board, offering resources, answering questions, and providing guidance on board operations.
- Board Chair Ali Salehi and Trustee Chris Montemayor attended the annual conference in Chicago, Illinois, a couple weeks ago.

Conference Debrief

- Focus on students, including secondary students, graduate salary, and graduation rates.
- Discussed student retention systems and innovations, focusing on enrollment strategies and faculty-to-student ratios.
- Universities are facing similar challenges, offering opportunities for different approaches.

Conferences and Networking

- It was encouraged for board members to attend conferences for networking and learning best practices.

Discussions and Concerns

- Discussions revolved around uncertain times and funding.
- A key topic was "institution of neutrality," and avoiding taking positions.
- The board aims to protect its mission, values, students, and faculty.

Key Takeaways

- Focus on the bigger picture and strategic plan success.
- Universities must prioritize student success.
- Balanced budgets should be achieved through living within means, not relying on reserves.

Board Self Evaluation

- The Board will do its own internal self-evaluation, using the same questionnaire as last year.
 - The Board's assistant will send out the questionnaire.

- Topics include board operations, board president relations, advocating for the University, institutional performance standards for university operations, community relations, and policy direction.
- The questionnaire is fillable online and should take about 10 minutes.
- The goal is to have the results by June 1, 2025 and be presented at the next board meeting.
- Upcoming officer elections and committee assignments are also on the agenda.
 - There will be an annual evaluation to ensure satisfaction with the current setup.
 - Trustees can express their preferences for committee chairs or members.
 - Candid feedback is encouraged on committee preferences.

There being no further business,

MOTION made by Trustee O'Rourke, seconded by Trustee Montemayor, to adjourn.

ROLL CALL VOTE passed motion unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:22 a.m.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

- a. Draft Minutes of December 9, 2024, Meeting

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 Governance and Nomination Committee meeting held on April 22, 2025.

Tessa Lucey, Secretary

Date