



## Board of Trustees

Advancement, Marketing, and External Relations Committee

**February 20, 2025**

**Minutes**

10:45 AM – 11:45 AM

Owl's Nest, Ely Campus 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 Chris Montemayor, Secretary Daniel Currier, Trustee Michael O'Rourke, Trustee Jason Queenin, and Board Chair Ali Salehi, ex-officio member

Also present and participating were Westfield State University President, Dr. Linda Thompson; Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Lisa McMahon; and Executive Director Communication, Marketing and Branding, Dr. Leslie Rice.

The meeting was called to order at 10:46 AM by Committee Vice Chair Chris Montemayor and it was announced that the meeting was being livestreamed and recorded.

**MOTION** made by Trustee Williams, seconded by Trustee O'Rourke, to accept the minutes from the December 9, 2024 meeting. There being no discussion, **a roll call was conducted**, all in favor, the **Motion passed**.

### **Marketing Update: Rebranding Efforts**

- The rebranding process is nearing completion, with extensive research incorporating feedback from various stakeholders (faculty, staff, alumni, etc.).
- The goal is to create an element of surprise with the rebrand unveiling. The final concepts should be ready next week, followed by an unveiling event.
- The current logo and colors will be changing, but the athletics logo will remain the same due to cost considerations. The University seal may be updated in the fall.
- The current brand is inconsistent with website and social media icons that are hard to recognize.

#### Connecting Brand to Strategic Goals

- The rebranding aims to strengthen the connection between the university's brand and its strategic goals, including student success and community engagement.
- A strong brand identity can foster a sense of belonging and emotional connection among students, encouraging them to stay connected to the community.
- The rebrand seeks to address increased awareness and knowledge about Westfield State University.
- The core value identified for the University is inquisitiveness, which aligns with the faculty's emphasis on lifelong learning and the leadership's approach to asking questions.

#### Logo Options and Concepts

- Four logo options were presented, representing a range of styles from artistic to practical.

- One logo pulls to an owl head and has the W.
  - One logo is designed to represent wisdom.
  - One logo pulls onto the owl and a feather.
- The rebranding includes a review of the language used to describe the University, aiming for more emotionally resonant messaging. "We have 256 acres of New England cedar" is not emotionally connecting.
- The final logo choice will consider factors such as color, representation, and how it looks in various applications (merchandise, print publications, website, etc.).
- The owl is a key element of the current identity that people want to retain.
- The design should connect to academia and the local environment (Westfield River).
- The logo needs to work across different platforms, from merchandise to websites to recruitment ads.
- Goal: To have a logo that fits everywhere, unlike the current logo which "simply doesn't work from a design perspective."
- Aim: To replace the current logo with something that everyone feels is theirs and evokes emotion.
- The seal will be reserved for special circumstances like presidential communications and official diplomas.

#### Color Issues

- Current blue inks will print in purple, causing inconsistency.
- Secondary color palette includes yellow, which is confusing because Worcester State University's colors are blue and yellow.
- Colors are chosen from a practical point of view to work with print shops and ensure materials match.
- Goal: To stand out from direct competitors.

#### Next Steps

- Next steps:
  - Campus unveiling of the logo.
  - Multiple departments will work together to change billboards, advertising, social identity, environmental branding, and signage.
  - Working with facilities to prioritize changes.
  - Redoing print and display materials (e.g., notepads, business cards).
  - Possibly creating sweatshirts with the new logo.
- New prep materials, viewbook, and magazine are in development.
- Recruitment for fall of 2026 has begun and will be reflected in the new book.

#### **Advancement/ Fundraising /Alumni Engagement**

- Engagement is expanding both on and off campus.
- The Cape Cod chapter has grown to over 100 members.
- Homecoming was more robust this year, kick-started by the 185th Blue Diamond Ball.
- Events like the Irish Tenors highlighted the campus and engaged new sponsors.
- A major gift officer in California is meeting with alumni to strengthen relationships.
- The Hogan Classic in Naples, Florida will include receptions and an event in Sarasota hosted by an alum.
- Plans for a fundraising campaign are moving forward. We are in the process of vetting three companies to work with our team through the discovery process, identifying and writing a case for support.
- We will be engaging members of our Board of Trustees, Westfield State University Foundation Board of Directors and the Westfield State Alumni Association Executive Council in this endeavor as we move forward.

#### Outreach Initiatives

- A Boston event is planned, and the campus platform is used to reach out through athletics, engaging parents and others not typically involved.
- The Keeper of the Dream event has gained momentum, with sponsors offering support after the initial event.
- Dr. Thompson's outreach in Georgia connected with Nettie Washington Douglass, enhancing campus events and student engagement.

#### **FY25 Q2 Dashboard**

- The FY25 Q2 data was shared showing total gifts and grants are ahead of FY24. One reason for this gain is due to increased online giving initiatives.
- Give A Hoot, our annual day of giving, is scheduled for March 26-27, 2025.

#### Commonwealth of Massachusetts Match

- The Commonwealth of Massachusetts match is an incentive program where the state matches funds raised.
- For every \$2 we raise, they'll give us a dollar.
- The limit is \$555,000 per university.
- The university is waiting to hear if they will have that this year.

No further discussion,

**MOTION** made by Trustee Currier, seconded by Trustee O'Rourke, to adjourn the meeting. There being no discussion, a roll call was conducted, **Motion passed unanimously**

Meeting adjourned at 11:28 AM.

#### **Attachments:**

- a. Draft Minutes, December 9, 2024
- b. MarComm Presentation
- c. Keeper of The Dream Booklet
- d. Dora Robinson Speaker Series Postcard
- e. Q2 IA Dashboard

#### **Secretary's Certificate**

I hereby certify that the foregoing is true and correct copy of the approved minutes of the Westfield State University Board of Trustees Advancement, Marketing, and External Affairs Committee meeting held on February 20, 2025.

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Daniel Currier, Secretary

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Date