



Board of Trustees

Special Meeting

August 9, 2024
8:00 am – 5:00 pm

The Starting Gate at Greathorse
128 Wilbraham Road, Hampden, Massachusetts

Board Members Present: Board Chair Ali Salehi, Vice Chair Melissa Alvarado, Secretary Dr. Gloria Williams, Members Paul Boudreau, Daniel Currier, Theresa Jasmin and George Gilmer.

Members Excused: Madeline Landrau, Tessa Lucey, Chris Montemayor, and William Reichelt.

Also present were Westfield State University President Dr. Linda Thompson, Provost Dr. William Salka, Dean of the School of Health, Natural Sciences and Human Services, Dr. Ziblim Abukari; Institutional Advancement Vice President Ms. Lisa McMahon; Vice President of Enrollment Management & Student Affairs, Dr. Kevin Hearn; Vice President of Administration & Finance Stephen Taksar; Chief of Staff and Special Assistant to the President on University Strategies, Dr. Michael Freeman; Director of Athletics, Richard Lenfest; Special Assistant to the President for Community and Governmental Affairs, Timothy Rooke; Dean of Division of Graduate and Continuing Education, Dr. Nora Padykula and special guest, Dr. Richard Freeland.

Board Chair Ali Salehi called the meeting to order at 8:45 AM and welcomed all in attendance. He provided those in attendance with updates as to the ongoing work the Trustees are conducting including Dr. Thompson's Presidential evaluation, and the Board's status on empty seats.

Dr. Thompson introduced special guest and presenter, Dr. Richard Freeland and the retreat's main topic of discussion, strategic planning, where are we now?

Dr. Michael Freeman presented the Board with background of the Strategic Planning Committee 2025-2030, who was on the committee, utilizing SME Strategy Management Consulting, and a session overview.

Dr. Kevin Hearn addressed the Board of Trustees by elaborating on the planning committee meetings. There were nine (9) in-person meetings open to the public called "caffeinated conversations" and three (3) through zoom. He dissected how the meetings progressed in forming four (4) strategic goals.

Dr. Thompson then educated the Board on the three (3) contexts for planning; report of Strategic Planning Committee, requirements of NECHE Reaccreditation, requirements of Department of Higher Education. She then explained in depth the four (4) strategic planning goals.

The final presentation by special guest Dr. Richard Freeland, focused on NECHE. What is NECHE, and timeline for their assessments. He also discussed the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, performance measuring system, and four (4) key challenges; enrollment planning, financial planning, assessment, and workforce development planning.

All guests present separated in to four (4) groups and were assigned topics; enrollment planning, financial planning, assessment, and workforce development planning.

Each group discussed the following;

Assessment

- The four (4) areas NECHE is concerned
- Major accredited programs
- Tracking student success
- CARE Center
- Cost free retention ideas
- Six (6) cost free student retention ideas
 1. Dual Advising program
 2. Starfish Program – focuses on struggling students
 3. CARE center underutilized – moving into Parenzo
 4. WSU 360
 5. Westfield in Four – course planning for first-year students
 6. Training on Student Support Offices for all Administrative Assistants

Enrollment Planning

- Admissions rates
- Career focus
- Partnerships with businesses
- Survey students more often
- Marketing more
- Detailed website

Financial Planning

- Need multi-year plan
- Revamped allocation
- Cultivate financial stewardship
- Refinance budget to today's standards
- Deferred maintenance
- Unspent dollars reallocated
- Transparency of financial resources

Workforce Planning

- 5X more likely to move out of poverty with a Bachelor's degree
- A degree is an investment
- DCGE pathways towards skipping a Bachelor's degree for Master's degree

- Co-op
- Workforce experience for credits

There being no further business, **MOTION** made to adjourn the meeting. There being no discussion, **motion passed unanimously**. Meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Attachment(s):

- a. Strategic Plan Update Presentation
- b. Dr. Freeland's Presentation
- c. Strategic Plan Goal Setting
- d. Strategic Plan Executive Summary
- e. SPC Master Document
- f. Economic Impact Analysis

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, Audit Committee meeting held on April 25, 2024.

William Reichelt, Vice Chair

Date