



Board of Trustees

August 8, 2025
8:30 AM to 5:00 PM

Board Retreat/ Special Meeting

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

-
- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. Call to Order | Mr. Ali Salehi, Chair |
| 2. Opening remarks | Mr. Ali Salehi, Chair |
| 3. Welcome & Introductions | Dr. Linda Thompson, President |
| 4. Items for Information | Dr. Shannon Brown/ Mr. JG Staal |
| a. How AI will impact Education Presentation and Q&A | ActionLogics |
| 5. Items for Discussion | Mr. Ali Salehi, Chair |
| a. Strategic Plan and KPIs | |
| b. Board/ Committee Structure | |
| i. Student Success | |
| ii. University Success | |
| iii. Institutional Research | |
| iv. Budget | |
| c. Board Self-evaluation | |
| 6. Adjournment | Mr. Ali Salehi, Chair |

Please stay for a reception on the deck from 5:00-6:00 p.m.

WSU Board of Trustees Retreat 2025 | AI Workshop

Start	Duration (mins)	Segment	Presenter/Facilitator
8:30am	15	Opening	Dr. Linda Thompson
8:45am	15	AI's Moment of Truth	JG Staal
9:00am	15	Board's Role in the AI Era	Dr. Shannon Brown
9:15am	45	Hands-on Exercises	JG Staal
10:00am	15	Exercise Results	JG Staal
10:15am	20	AI Solutions	JG Staal / Jillian Yourges (Google)
10:35am	10	Activate the Future	Dr. Linda Thompson / Dr. Shannon Brown
10:45am		Break	

Six Oversight Questions Every Trustee Should Be Ready to Answer

#	Core Question	Why It Matters / What "Good" Looks Like
1 Strategy & Alignment	How does AI advance our mission, student success, research competitiveness, and financial resilience in the next 3 years?	Board has approved a concise AI strategy, linked to the strategic plan and budget.
2 Leadership & Governance	Who owns AI strategy (name & title), and how often do they brief the board?	A CAIO (or equivalent) with direct presidential line; quarterly reports; cross-functional governance council chartered.
3 Risk & Ethics	Do we have a board-approved Responsible-AI policy that tackles bias, privacy, transparency, and academic integrity, and how is adherence measured?	Policy in place; annual internal-audit or risk-committee review; incident-response plan covers AI breaches.
4 Infrastructure & Security	Is our data/tech infrastructure—incl. sandbox environments—robust enough to experiment and scale AI without exposing sensitive data?	Secure cloud tenancy, role-based access, sandbox similar to Stanford's model; funding committed in capital plan.
5 Talent & Literacy	What percentage of trustees, faculty, and staff have completed AI-literacy training, and is AI expertise a criterion for board recruitment?	Tiered workshops running (Case Western/Ohio models); board education embedded in annual retreat agenda.

Frontier Models

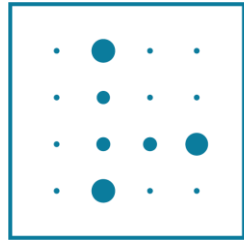
<https://Claude.ai>

<https://ChatGPT.com>

<https://Aistudio.google.com>

<https://Grok.com>

<https://Meta.ai>



ActionLogics

We Solve People Problems. Fast.



We Developed
ActionLogics to
Solve People Problems
By Improving Engagement



ActionLogics

Proprietary and
Confidential



Strong Proven Results.
Payback Measured in
Months.

Reduction in Voluntary
Turnover
at a Fortune 25 Company

19.5%

Average

40.7

%

Peak



ActionLogics

Proprietary and
Confidential

Introducing A Robust, Flexible and Action Oriented Solution

Reduced Turnover, Improved Engagement and Higher Productivity will deliver significant savings to the bottom line



Personalization

Push content and nudges based on individual's interest, interactions, and feedback



Real Time Feedback

Easy-To-Use Survey tool to track engagement and surface critical issues and areas of concern during key experiences



Communication

Inform individuals and supervisors about organizational updates, especially during major changes



Development

Drive internal mobility and connect individuals and supervisors to mentoring and career development programs



Recruiting/Onboarding

Provide rich experiences during the early phases of the individual's journey.



Actionable Analytics

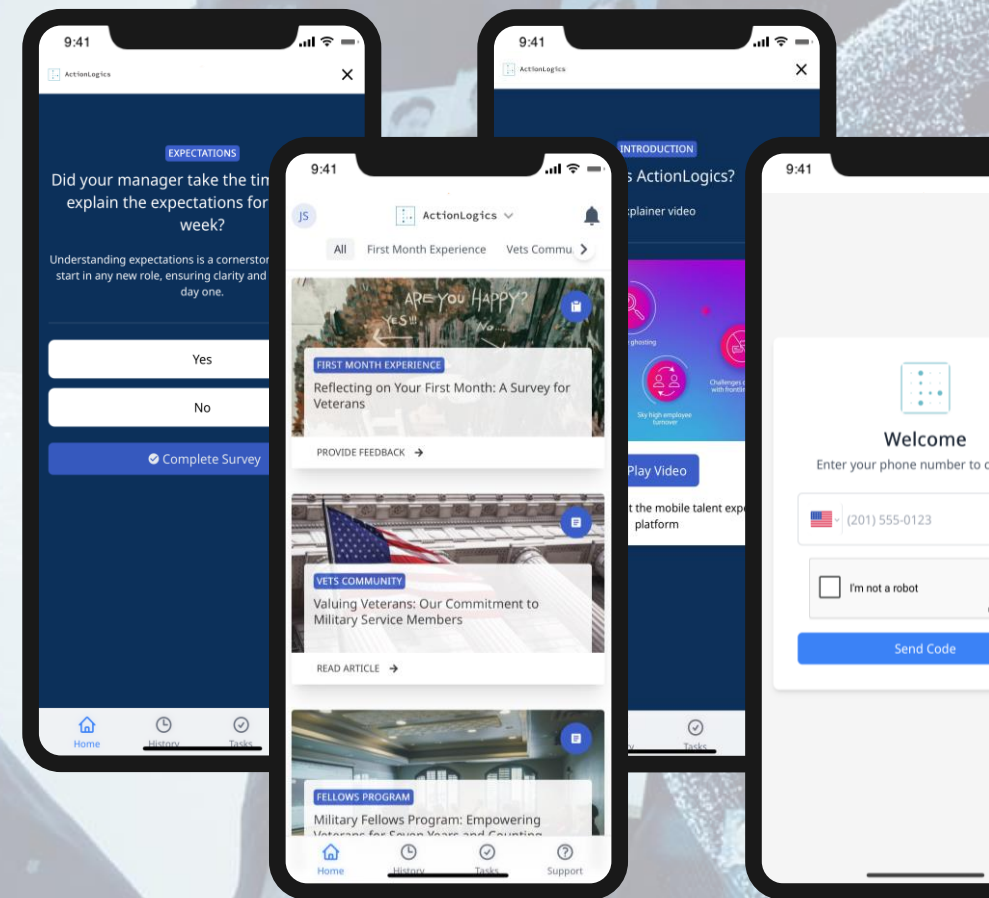
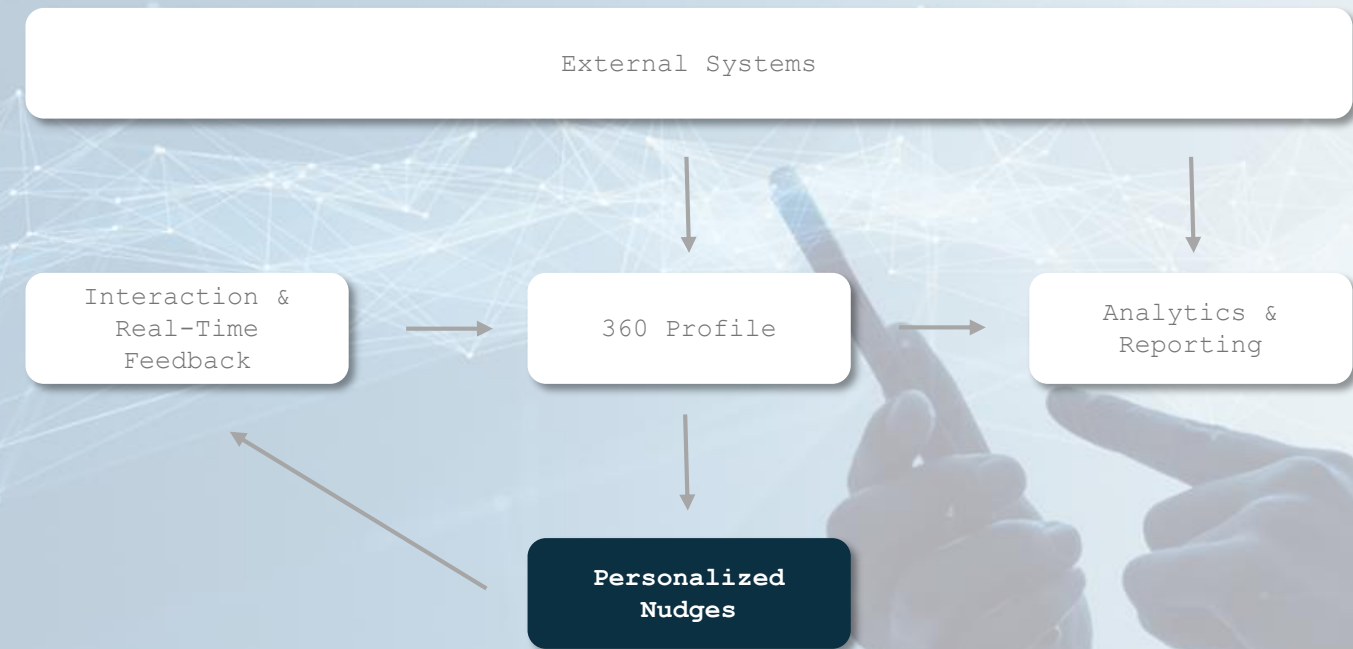
Provide real-time insights and trends for leadership and managers to drive ongoing improvements



ActionLogics

Proprietary and Confidential

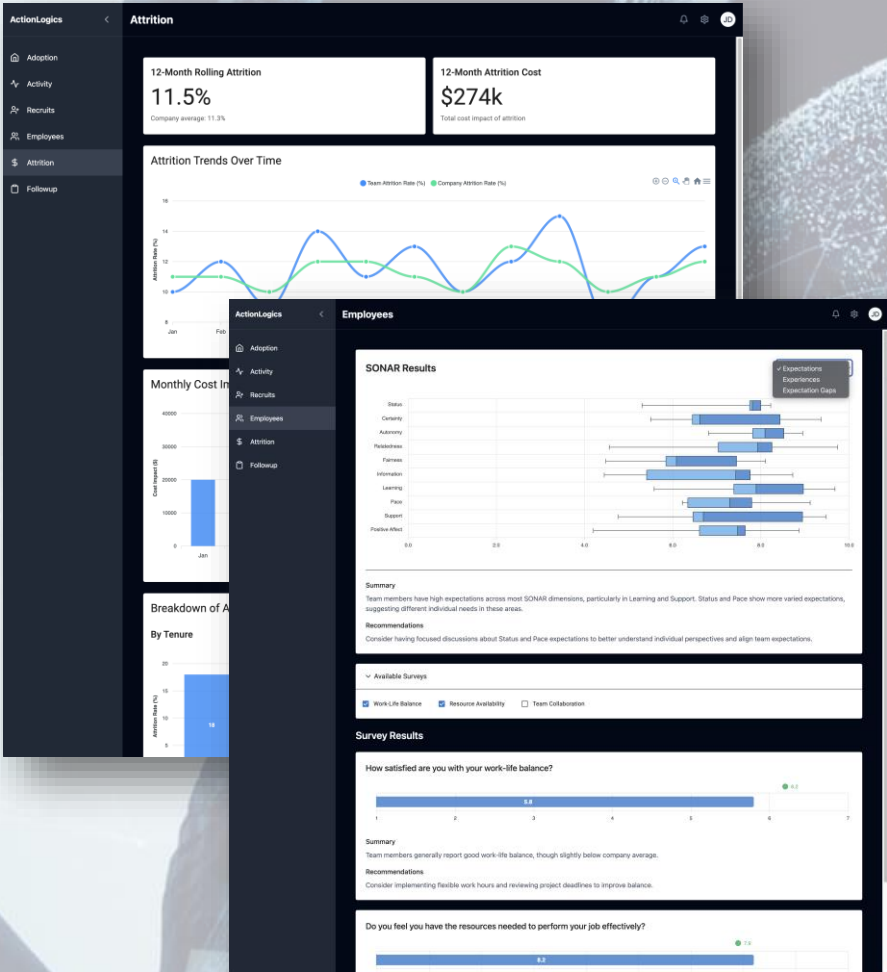
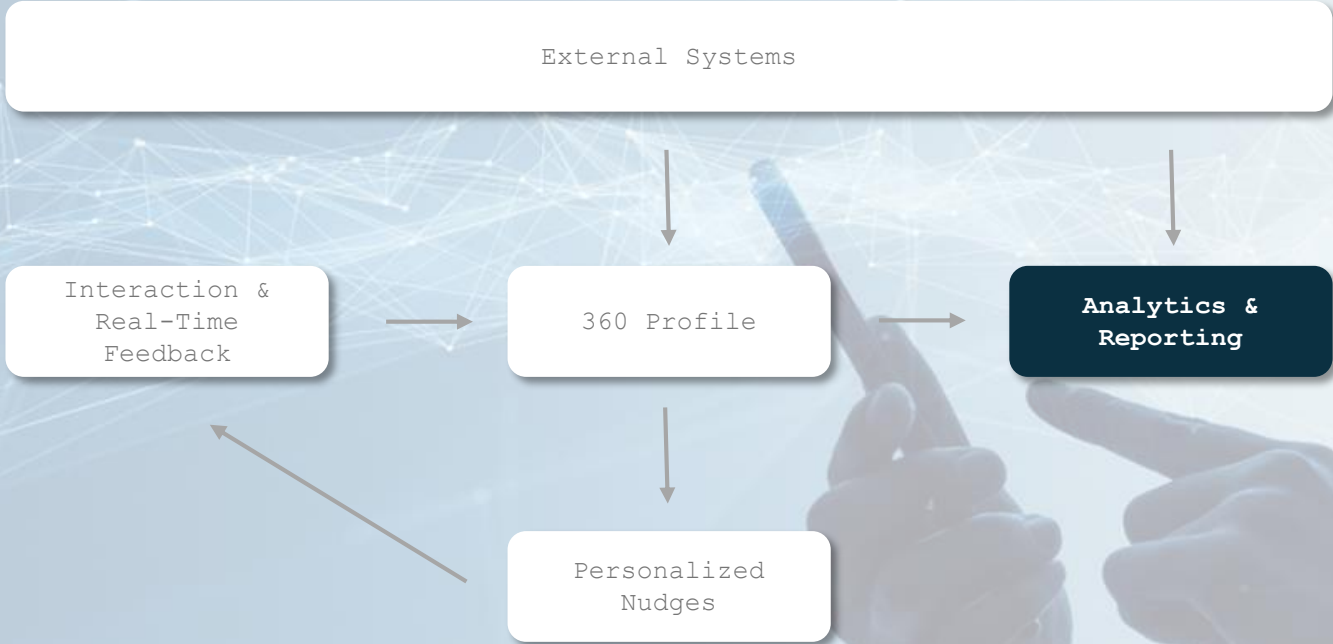
How Do We Reduce Attrition?



ActionLogics

Proprietary and
Confidential

How Do We Reduce Attrition?



ActionLogics Is Uniquely Positioned To Provide These Key Advantages

- Time to Deploy
- Ease of Use
- Real-Time Analytics
- Mobile Reach of All Employees
- Proven Results



ActionLogics

Proprietary and Confidential

Experienced Leadership Team



**Dr. Shannon
Brown**

Chief Executive
Officer



**Kristian
Bouw**

Chief Technical
Officer



**Kim
Alexander**

Chief Operating
Officer



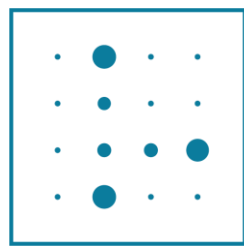
**JG
Staal**

Chief
Product Officer



ActionLogics

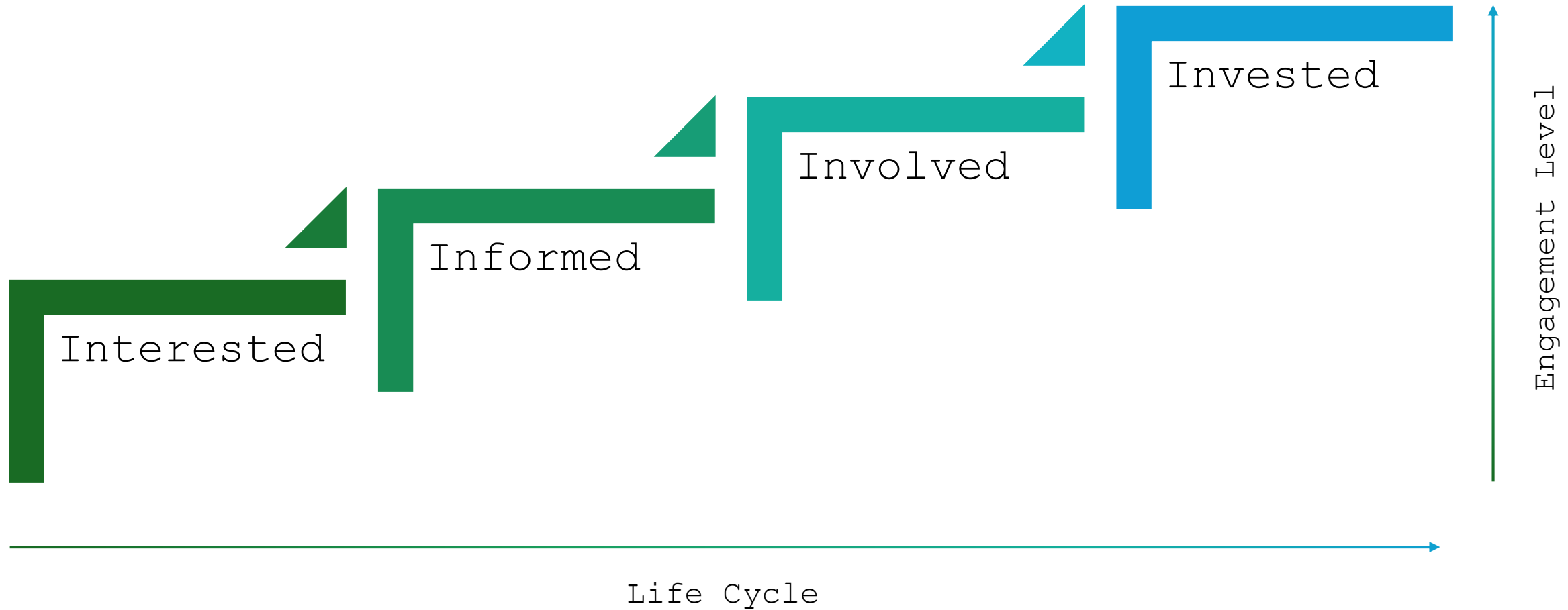
Proprietary and Confidential



ActionLogics



Engagement Maturity Model



The True Cost of Attrition

Industry	Avg. Annual Attrition Rate	Avg. Cost to Replace Worker	Cost Breakdown [3, 12]
Manufacturing	25-35% [1]	\$10k-\$30k [2]	40% hard (recruiting, training) 60% soft (lost output)
Logistics & Transport	45-50% (sector avg.) [4]	\$7k-\$8k (warehouse worker)	50% hard (hiring, onboarding)
	Up to 90% for trucking [5]	\$6k-\$12k (truck driver) [5]	50% soft (productivity, safety)
Retail	60% (frontline retail) [6]	\$3k-\$4k (store associate) [7]	30% hard (hiring, training) 70% soft (lost sales, service)
Healthcare	20-30% (hospital staff) [8]	\$40k (registered nurse) [9] \$10k-\$20k (aide/tech est.)	35% hard (recruitment, orientation) 65% soft (temporary coverage, patient impact)
Mining	30% (mining workers) [10]	\$5k+ (entry miner direct cost) [10] Tens of thousands incl. productivity	40% hard (hiring, training gear) 60% soft (ramp-up time, expertise loss)
Hospitality	70-80% (frontline) [11]	\$6k - \$10k (hotel frontline) [12]	35 % hard (hiring, onboarding, uniforms/training) 65 % soft (productivity, customer-experience hits)
Education	10-15 % (teacher attrition)	<div>Education 500 employees 10% attrition \$22.5k hard costs Yearly Hard Cost to Replace : \$14M</div>	35% hard costs (advertising, screening, onboarding) 65% soft costs (mentoring time, morale)

Proprietary and
Confidential

State of the Global Workplace

THE VOICE OF THE WORLD'S EMPLOYEES

ENGAGED

23% 0

NOT ENGAGED

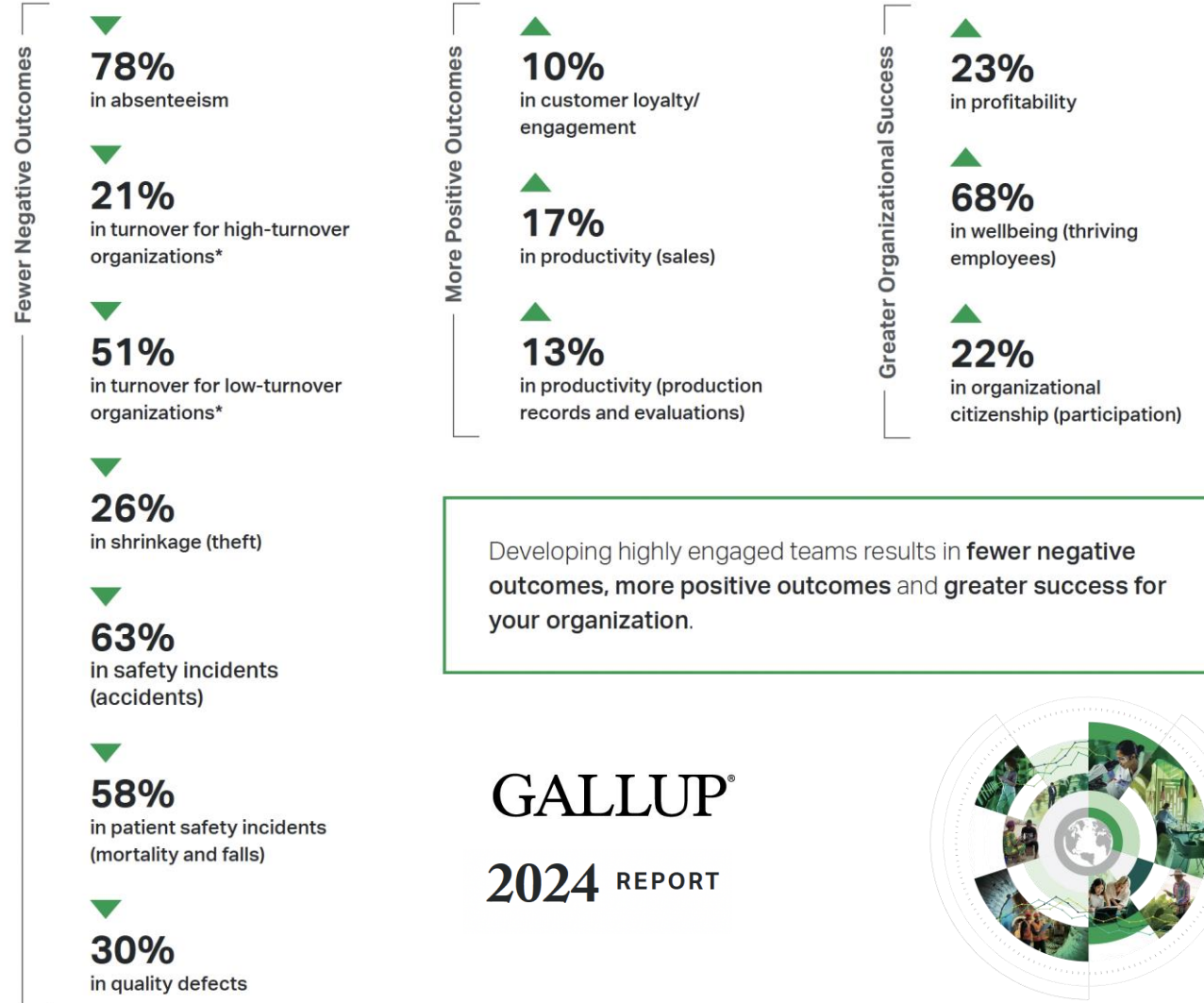
62% +3

ACTIVELY DISENGAGED

15% -3

Outcomes of Highly Engaged Business Units and Teams

Difference between top- and bottom-quartile teams/business units within a typical organization



ActionLogics

Proprietary and
Confidential

Exercise 1: Shared AI Vision and Mission Alignment

Objective: Develop a unified institutional AI mission statement aligned with ethics and risk awareness.

Take-away: Clearly articulated AI mission integrating ethical considerations and institutional values.

Starter Prompt: "You are a strategy consultant helping higher education institutions. I need you to draft a concise institutional AI mission statement (under 200 words) that aligns with our liberal arts mission, equity commitments, and long-term educational goals."

First, ask me 3-4 clarifying questions about our institution to help you create a tailored response. Then draft the mission statement and explain your reasoning for the key elements you included."

Context Considerations: When interacting with AI, mention specific details about your institution for more tailored responses:

- Institution type and size
- Key academic programs and professional schools
- Current strategic priorities and mission elements
- Existing equity and inclusion commitments
- Geographic setting and student demographics

Suggested Follow-up Questions:

- "What specific language should we include to address faculty concerns about AI replacing human instruction?"
- "Can you suggest 3 key performance indicators to measure how well we're living up to this AI mission?"
- "What are the biggest risks if we don't have a clear AI mission statement?"
- "How should we communicate this mission to different campus constituencies (faculty, students, staff, alumni)?"

Using Gemini's Research Feature: For deeper insights, try using the 'Research' option with questions like: "Research how other liberal arts colleges have crafted their AI mission statements and what outcomes they've achieved."

General Follow-up Question Techniques:

- "Can you make this more specific to our institutional context?"
- "What are the implementation challenges we haven't considered?"
- "What would be the biggest mistake we could make with this approach?"
- "What questions should we be asking that I haven't thought of?"

Multi-Modal Creation Options: Try asking AI to create visual representations of your work:

- **Mission infographic:** "Create a one-page infographic that visually presents our AI mission statement with icons and key phrases suitable for posting in campus buildings"
- **Stakeholder communication:** "Design a simple visual showing how this AI mission connects to student success, faculty empowerment, and institutional excellence"
- **Values alignment chart:** "Create a visual diagram showing how our AI mission aligns with our core institutional values"

Reporting Back to the Group (3-5 minutes):

1. **Brief overview** of your assigned topic and objective
2. **Key findings** from your AI interaction (2-3 main takeaways)
3. **Surprises or insights** about AI capabilities you discovered
4. **Specific recommendations** for our institution
5. **One visual or creative output** you created (optional)

Exercise 2: Risk Identification and Mitigation Plan

Objective: Identify and prioritize institutional AI risks and create corresponding mitigation strategies.

Take-away: Institutional AI risk profile and actionable mitigation strategies.

Starter Prompt: "You are an experienced higher education risk management officer. I need you to help me understand and assess AI-related risks for our institution.

First, briefly explain what AI can and cannot currently do in higher education settings - give me 3 examples of each. Then create a detailed table with the top 7 AI-related risks for our institution, covering academics, administration, and research. Use these columns: Risk Description, Likelihood (Low/Medium/High), Potential Impact (Low/Medium/High), and Specific Mitigation Actions.

After the table, explain which risk you think should be our top priority and why."

Context Considerations: Share relevant institutional details with AI to get more accurate risk assessments:

- Institution size, type, and complexity (research vs. teaching focus)
- Current technology infrastructure and IT capacity
- Regulatory environment (professional program accreditations, compliance requirements)
- Student demographics and campus culture
- Existing risk management policies and governance structures

Suggested Follow-up Questions:

- "Which of these risks would be most catastrophic for our institution's reputation?"
- "Can you provide specific examples of how [highest priority risk] has affected other colleges?"
- "What early warning signs should we watch for to detect these risks before they become problems?"
- "What governance structures do other institutions use to monitor these AI risks?"
- "Can you estimate potential financial costs if we don't mitigate the top 3 risks?"

Using Gemini's Research Feature: For comprehensive risk analysis, try: "Research recent AI-related incidents and failures at higher education institutions, including financial and reputational impacts."

General Follow-up Question Techniques:

- "Can you make this more specific to our institutional context?"
- "What are the implementation challenges we haven't considered?"
- "What would be the biggest mistake we could make with this approach?"
- "What questions should we be asking that I haven't thought of?"

Multi-Modal Creation Options: Transform your risk analysis into compelling visuals:

- **Risk dashboard:** "Create a visual dashboard design showing our top AI risks with color-coded risk levels (red/yellow/green) and progress indicators"
- **Risk matrix visualization:** "Design a 2x2 risk matrix chart plotting our 7 risks by likelihood vs. impact, with each risk clearly labeled"
- **Board presentation slides:** "Create a slide deck outline with 5 slides presenting these risks to trustees, including titles and key visual elements for each slide"

Reporting Back to the Group (3-5 minutes):

1. **Brief overview** of your assigned topic and objective
2. **Key findings** from your AI interaction (2-3 main takeaways)
3. **Surprises or insights** about AI capabilities you discovered
4. **Specific recommendations** for our institution
5. **One visual or creative output** you created (optional)

Exercise 3: AI Ethics Policy

Objective: Establish guidelines and principles to ensure ethical AI use across the institution.

Take-away: Formalized AI ethics policy tailored to higher education contexts.

Starter Prompt: "You are an AI ethics advisor specializing in higher education. I need you to help our institution develop ethical AI policies."

Start by explaining why AI ethics matter in higher education - give me 2-3 real examples of ethical concerns that have emerged at other colleges. Then draft a comprehensive outline for our institutional AI ethics policies that addresses: bias and fairness, transparency and explainability, privacy protection, academic integrity, and data security.

For each policy area, include both the principle and 2-3 specific implementation guidelines. End by suggesting how we should communicate these policies to faculty, staff, and students."

Context Considerations: Provide AI with institutional context for relevant ethics policy recommendations:

- Professional programs that have specific ethical codes
- Existing institutional ethical guidelines and honor codes
- Compliance obligations (FERPA, HIPAA for health programs, professional accreditation standards)
- Campus culture and community values
- Student and faculty diversity considerations

Suggested Follow-up Questions:

- "What specific training should we provide to faculty and staff about these ethics policies?"
- "How do we balance innovation with ethical constraints - where should we draw the line?"
- "Can you provide examples of ethics violations we should specifically prohibit in our policy?"
- "How should we handle situations where AI recommendations conflict with human judgment?"
- "What oversight mechanisms should trustees have for monitoring ethics compliance?"
- "How do we make these policies practical and enforceable rather than just aspirational?"

Using Gemini's Research Feature: For evidence-based ethics policies, try:
"Research current AI ethics frameworks and policies at universities, including recent regulatory guidance and compliance requirements."

General Follow-up Question Techniques:

- "Can you make this more specific to our institutional context?"
- "What are the implementation challenges we haven't considered?"
- "What would be the biggest mistake we could make with this approach?"
- "What questions should we be asking that I haven't thought of?"

Multi-Modal Creation Options: Make ethics policies accessible and engaging:

- **Ethics infographic:** "Create a student-friendly infographic explaining our AI ethics principles with simple icons and clear examples of do's and don'ts"
- **Policy flowchart:** "Design a decision-making flowchart that helps faculty and staff determine if their AI use aligns with our ethics policies"
- **Communication poster:** "Create a visual poster summarizing our AI ethics commitments suitable for displaying in faculty lounges and student centers"

Reporting Back to the Group (3-5 minutes):

1. **Brief overview** of your assigned topic and objective
2. **Key findings** from your AI interaction (2-3 main takeaways)
3. **Surprises or insights** about AI capabilities you discovered
4. **Specific recommendations** for our institution
5. **One visual or creative output** you created (optional)

Exercise 4: Strategic AI Implementation Roadmap

Objective: Outline prioritized AI initiatives with clear next steps, timelines, and required resources.

Take-away: Actionable AI implementation roadmap.

Starter Prompt: "You are a strategic AI implementation consultant working with higher education institutions. I need you to create a practical roadmap for AI adoption at our college.

Begin by outlining what a successful AI implementation looks like in higher education - describe 3 key success indicators. Then develop a 12-18 month implementation roadmap that includes: priority AI initiatives (rank top 5), specific next steps for each, key milestones with target dates, required resources (budget, staff, technology), and success metrics.

Present this in a format suitable for trustee review and oversight. Include a section on potential obstacles and how to overcome them."

Context Considerations: Help AI create a realistic roadmap by sharing:

- Current budget constraints and funding sources
- Institutional priorities and strategic plan goals
- Existing technology infrastructure and IT staffing
- Faculty and staff readiness for change
- Timeline pressures and upcoming strategic deadlines

Suggested Follow-up Questions:

- "What would be the total estimated budget needed for this full roadmap?"
- "Which initiatives could we start with minimal upfront investment?"
- "How do we sequence these initiatives if we can only fund one major project per year?"
- "What staff positions or expertise will we need to hire that we don't currently have?"
- "Can you identify potential partnerships with other institutions to share costs?"
- "What would happen if we delay AI implementation for another 2-3 years?"

Using Gemini's Research Feature: For data-driven roadmaps, try: "Research successful AI implementation timelines and budgets at similar higher education institutions, including lessons learned and ROI data."

General Follow-up Question Techniques:

- "Can you make this more specific to our institutional context?"
- "What are the implementation challenges we haven't considered?"
- "What would be the biggest mistake we could make with this approach?"
- "What questions should we be asking that I haven't thought of?"

Multi-Modal Creation Options: Visualize your strategic roadmap for clear communication:

- **Timeline visualization:** "Create a visual timeline showing our AI implementation roadmap over 18 months with key milestones, dependencies, and resource requirements"
- **Budget breakdown chart:** "Design a pie chart or bar chart showing budget allocation across different AI initiatives with cost categories clearly labeled"
- **Executive summary slide:** "Create a one-slide executive summary of our AI roadmap suitable for presentation to the full board, highlighting priorities and timeline"

Reporting Back to the Group (3-5 minutes):

1. **Brief overview** of your assigned topic and objective
2. **Key findings** from your AI interaction (2-3 main takeaways)
3. **Surprises or insights** about AI capabilities you discovered
4. **Specific recommendations** for our institution
5. **One visual or creative output** you created (optional)

Exercise 5: Institutional Awareness and Readiness

*** This example focuses on 'Trustees,' though this could be substituted with 'Leadership' to emphasize different aspects.

Objective: Enhance trustees' understanding of AI adoption benefits, challenges, and responsibilities.

Take-away: Increased trustee readiness and comprehensive institutional awareness regarding AI adoption.

Starter Prompt: "You are an AI education specialist who helps higher education leaders understand AI adoption. I need you to prepare trustees for comprehensive AI adoption at our institution.

Start by providing 4-5 concrete examples of how AI is currently being used successfully at similar colleges and universities. Then create a comprehensive summary covering: key benefits of AI adoption (with specific examples), anticipated challenges and how to address them, and specific trustee oversight responsibilities and decision points.

Focus on what trustees need to know to support student success and institutional effectiveness. Include questions trustees should be asking leadership about AI initiatives."

Context Considerations: Share institutional context to get relevant readiness insights:

- Current trustee familiarity with technology initiatives
- Past experiences with major technology implementations (successes/challenges)
- Faculty and staff attitudes toward innovation and change
- Student technology usage and expectations
- Peer institutions you benchmark against

Suggested Follow-up Questions:

- "What are the top 3 questions trustees should ask the president about AI initiatives?"
- "How do we know if our AI adoption is successful compared to peer institutions?"
- "What specific faculty resistance should we expect and how do we address it?"
- "Can you provide concrete examples of how AI has improved student retention or success elsewhere?"
- "What red flags should trustees watch for that indicate AI implementation is going poorly?"
- "How do we balance moving quickly with being thoughtful about AI adoption?"

Using Gemini's Research Feature: For comprehensive insights, try: "Research current trends in AI adoption at higher education institutions, including success metrics, common challenges, and trustee oversight best practices."

General Follow-up Question Techniques:

- "Can you make this more specific to our institutional context?"
- "What are the implementation challenges we haven't considered?"
- "What would be the biggest mistake we could make with this approach?"
- "What questions should we be asking that I haven't thought of?"

Multi-Modal Creation Options: Create materials to educate and inform stakeholders:

- **Trustee education infographic:** "Create a visual guide showing key benefits and challenges of AI adoption with statistics and examples relevant to higher education"
- **Success metrics dashboard:** "Design a visual dashboard showing how we'll measure AI success with specific KPIs and benchmarks against peer institutions"
- **Stakeholder communication plan:** "Create a visual timeline showing how we'll communicate AI adoption progress to different groups (faculty, students, alumni, community)"

Reporting Back to the Group (3-5 minutes):

1. **Brief overview** of your assigned topic and objective
2. **Key findings** from your AI interaction (2-3 main takeaways)
3. **Surprises or insights** about AI capabilities you discovered
4. **Specific recommendations** for our institution
5. **One visual or creative output** you created (optional)

Exercise 6: Governance and Oversight Protocols

Objective: Clarify roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes for AI oversight.

Take-away: Defined AI governance protocols with clear trustee oversight.

Starter Prompt: "You are a governance expert specializing in higher education technology oversight. I need you to help define clear AI governance protocols for our institution.

First, explain the difference between operational AI decisions and strategic AI decisions - give examples of each. Then create a detailed framework that defines: specific trustee roles and responsibilities for AI oversight, clear decision-making processes for different types of AI projects, reporting mechanisms and frequency, and key performance indicators trustees should monitor.

Include a decision tree showing when trustee approval is needed versus when leadership can proceed independently. End with suggested agenda items for regular trustee AI oversight."

Context Considerations: Describe your governance context for tailored oversight recommendations:

- Current board committee structure and areas of focus
- Existing technology or innovation oversight experience
- Board size and trustee expertise areas
- Reporting relationships between board, administration, and faculty
- Previous major initiative oversight approaches (successful models to build on)

Suggested Follow-up Questions:

- "How often should trustees receive formal reports on AI initiatives?"
- "What specific metrics should be included in trustee AI dashboards?"
- "When should trustees require external expert review of AI projects?"
- "How do we ensure trustees have enough expertise to provide meaningful oversight?"
- "What AI decisions require full board approval versus committee approval?"
- "Can you create a sample agenda for quarterly trustee AI oversight meetings?"

Using Gemini's Research Feature: For governance best practices, try: "Research AI governance structures and oversight models currently used by university boards of trustees, including reporting frameworks and decision-making protocols."

General Follow-up Question Techniques:

- "Can you make this more specific to our institutional context?"
- "What are the implementation challenges we haven't considered?"
- "What would be the biggest mistake we could make with this approach?"
- "What questions should we be asking that I haven't thought of?"

Multi-Modal Creation Options: Visualize governance structures for clarity and implementation:

- **Governance flowchart:** "Create a clear flowchart showing AI decision-making processes, including when trustee approval is needed and which committees are involved"
- **Roles and responsibilities chart:** "Design an organizational chart showing who oversees what aspects of AI governance, from trustees to administration to faculty"
- **Oversight dashboard design:** "Create a mockup of a trustee dashboard showing key AI metrics, project status, and risk indicators that should be reviewed quarterly"

Reporting Back to the Group (3-5 minutes):

1. **Brief overview** of your assigned topic and objective
2. **Key findings** from your AI interaction (2-3 main takeaways)
3. **Surprises or insights** about AI capabilities you discovered
4. **Specific recommendations** for our institution
5. **One visual or creative output** you created (optional)

Exercise 7: Immediate Next Steps and Quick Wins

Objective: Identify pilot AI projects that quickly demonstrate value and build institutional confidence.

Take-away: Defined pilot projects for immediate AI implementation and tangible results.

Starter Prompt: "You are a higher education technology consultant specializing in AI pilot projects. I need you to identify practical AI initiatives our institution can implement quickly to demonstrate value and build confidence.

Start by explaining what makes a good AI pilot project in higher education. Then provide 3 specific pilot project recommendations for immediate implementation (within 6 months). For each project, include: detailed project description, estimated costs (break down by category), responsible department/owner, timeline with key milestones, measurable success metrics, and potential risks.

Focus on projects that will improve either student outcomes or operational efficiency. Rank them by ease of implementation and potential impact."

Context Considerations: Help AI suggest appropriate pilot projects by sharing:

- Current pressing institutional challenges or opportunities
- Available budget for short-term initiatives
- Staff capacity and technical expertise
- Data availability and systems integration capabilities
- Areas where quick wins would build most campus support for AI adoption

Suggested Follow-up Questions:

- "Which of these pilot projects would give us the biggest 'wow factor' to build campus support?"
- "What could go wrong with each pilot project and how do we prepare for those scenarios?"
- "How do we measure return on investment for these pilot projects?"
- "Can you suggest specific vendors or platforms for implementing each pilot?"
- "What data do we need to collect before starting these pilots?"
- "How do we scale successful pilots to institution-wide implementation?"

Using Gemini's Research Feature: For evidence-based pilot selection, try: "Research successful AI pilot projects at colleges and universities, including implementation costs, timelines, and measured outcomes."

General Follow-up Question Techniques:

- "Can you make this more specific to our institutional context?"
- "What are the implementation challenges we haven't considered?"
- "What would be the biggest mistake we could make with this approach?"
- "What questions should we be asking that I haven't thought of?"

Multi-Modal Creation Options: Present pilot projects in compelling, actionable formats:

- **Pilot project comparison chart:** "Create a visual comparison of our 3 pilot projects showing costs, timelines, benefits, and risks in an easy-to-compare format"
- **Implementation timeline:** "Design a Gantt chart or timeline showing the 6-month implementation schedule for each pilot with key milestones and dependencies"
- **ROI projection graphics:** "Create before/after visualizations showing expected improvements from each pilot project with specific metrics and outcomes"

Reporting Back to the Group (3-5 minutes):

1. **Brief overview** of your assigned topic and objective
2. **Key findings** from your AI interaction (2-3 main takeaways)
3. **Surprises or insights** about AI capabilities you discovered
4. **Specific recommendations** for our institution
5. **One visual or creative output** you created (optional)

Prompting Cheat-Sheet

1. Frame the Role & Goal

Template - "You are my **[role]**. Our goal is **[outcome]** for a 4,500-student university that wants to become AI-leading. Work within **[constraints]**. Ask any clarifying questions until you are confident about what is expected from you."

- **Why:** Gives the model context → crisper, on-target answers.
- **Tip:** Add mission or values if you want outputs to reflect them.

2. Specify the Format

- "Bullet list of 5 items"
- "Table with columns: Risk, Likelihood, Impact, Mitigation"
- "200-word draft using inclusive language"
- "Executive summary with key recommendations"

3. Iterate & Drill Down

Initial ask → "Refine: add equity lens" → "Shorten to slide title length"

- Use follow-ups instead of new chats so the model keeps context.
- Ask "What did you assume that might be wrong?" to surface hidden biases.

4. The Art of Providing Context

Why Context Matters: AI performs better when it understands your situation, constraints, and goals.

Essential Context to Include:

- **Institution type & size:** "We're a 4,500-student liberal arts college..."
- **Current state:** "We currently have no formal AI policies..."
- **Constraints:** "Working with a limited IT budget..."
- **Stakeholders:** "Faculty are concerned about job displacement..."
- **Timeline:** "We need recommendations for the next board meeting..."
- **Values:** "Equity and inclusion are central to our mission..."

Context Examples:

- Instead of: "Create an AI policy"
- Try: "Create an AI policy for a 2,000-student community college where faculty are skeptical of technology and we have one IT person"

5. Advanced Prompting Techniques

Ask AI to Think Step-by-Step:

- "Before giving recommendations, first analyze our current situation, then identify key challenges, then propose solutions"

Request Multiple Perspectives:

- "Give me both the optimistic and pessimistic view of this AI initiative"
- "How would faculty, students, and administrators each react to this proposal?"

Use Comparative Analysis:

- "Compare this approach to what peer institutions are doing"
- "What are the pros and cons of centralized vs. decentralized AI governance?"

Challenge AI Assumptions:

- "What assumptions are you making about our institution that might be wrong?"
- "What important considerations might you be missing?"

6. Creating Visual Content with AI

Why Visuals Matter: AI can create infographics, charts, and presentation materials that make your ideas more compelling and easier to communicate.

Visual Format Examples:

- "Create an infographic showing [topic] with icons and key phrases"
- "Design a flowchart for [decision process] with clear steps and decision points"
- "Create a dashboard mockup displaying [metrics] with color-coded indicators"
- "Design a timeline visualization showing [project/process] over [timeframe]"
- "Create a comparison chart showing [options] with pros, cons, and costs"

Tips for Better Visual Prompts:

- **Be specific about format:** "infographic," "flowchart," "dashboard," not just "visual"
- **Specify audience:** "suitable for faculty," "appropriate for board presentation"
- **Include key elements:** "with icons," "color-coded," "clearly labeled"
- **State the purpose:** "for posting in buildings," "for trustee review," "for
- **Be explicit:** Sometimes AI models describe what should be in a visual rather than creating it. If you ask for an infographic or chart and get a description instead, coach the LLM to be more explicit: "Don't tell me what should be on the infographic... create it" or "Generate the actual visual, not a description."

7. Quality Checks Before You Trust the Output

- **Relevance:** Does it answer the exact question?
- **Evidence:** Ask "Provide citations or real-world examples."
- **Bias & Compliance:** Ask "Where could bias or FERPA issues arise?"
- **Brevity:** "Condense to executive-summary bullets (≤ 120 words)."

8. Data-Security Reminders

- **No student PII** in prompts. Use placeholders ("Student A").
- Treat all outputs as drafts—legal & policy review still required.
- When testing proprietary data, use the university's secure sandbox.

9. Prompt Power Moves

- **Anchoring:** "According to AGB 2024 board guidance, ..."
- **Perspective Switch:** "Rewrite from a student-trustee viewpoint."
- **Scoring/Ranking:** "Rate each pilot 1-5 on feasibility & ROI."
- **Contrast:** "Compare risks of centralized vs. departmental AI budgets in a table."

10. Use 'Please' ?

- **Claude (Sonnet 4)**

"Not really! I'm designed to be helpful regardless of whether you use "please" or other polite language. I'll put the same effort into assisting you whether your request is formally polite or more casual and direct.

That said, many people find that using polite language helps them think through their requests more clearly, and it can make interactions feel more natural and

comfortable. But from my perspective, what matters most is understanding what you need help with, not the specific phrasing you use.

Feel free to communicate with me however feels most natural to you!"

- **ChatGPT (4.5)**

"While it's not required, saying "please" can positively influence the tone of our interactions—just like it would when communicating with people. You're always welcome to phrase your requests however feels most comfortable to you!"

- **Gemini (2.5 Pro)**

"That's a great question! It gets to the heart of how people interact with AI.

Here's the direct answer, followed by the more nuanced one.

The Direct, Technical Answer:

No, it does not technically help to say "please." As an AI, I don't have feelings, emotions, or an ego. My programming doesn't include a function that provides better or faster answers if the user is polite. I process the core request of your prompt—the keywords, context, and instructions—regardless of pleasantries.

A prompt like "Give me five ideas for a fantasy novel" will be processed with the same priority and quality as "Could you please give me five ideas for a fantasy novel? Thank you!"

The More Nuanced, Human Answer:

While it doesn't help me, it can indirectly help you get a better result. Here's why:

It Frames Your Thinking: When you take a moment to be polite, you often phrase your request as a more complete, well-structured question. This can lead you to add more detail and context, which is the single most important factor in getting a great response from me.

Command: "List facts about sharks."

Polite Request: "Please, could you list some interesting and little-known facts about sharks, suitable for a 10-year-old's school project?"

The second prompt is better not because of the "please," but because the act of phrasing it politely encouraged more specific instructions.

It's a Good Habit: Interacting with AI is becoming a daily activity for many. Treating it with a degree of politeness helps reinforce good communication habits that carry over into your interactions with other people.

It Makes the Interaction More Pleasant for You: Constantly giving blunt commands can feel transactional and impersonal. A more conversational and polite tone can make the experience of using an AI feel more like a collaborative partnership, which can be more enjoyable and productive.

In summary: You don't have to say please, and I won't be "offended" if you don't. But if being polite helps you formulate clearer thoughts and makes the interaction better for you, then by all means, continue! I will always process your request based on its content, but the politeness is a welcome part of the human-to-AI conversation."

WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY

Strategic Plan

2025–2029

**INFINITE
OPPORTUNITIES**





Table of Contents

Introduction	1
A Message From the President	3
Our Mission, Vision, and Values	4
Milestones and Timeline	5
Strategic Priorities	6
Goals, Objectives, and Actions	
Goal 1: Foster Innovative Learning	8–10
Goal 2: Advance Student Success	11–13
Goal 3: Optimize Stewardship of Campus Resources	14–17
Goal 4: Amplify Institutional Impact and Influence	18–19
Aligning Strategic Priorities with Statewide System Initiatives	20
Strategic Planning Committee	22
Westfield State University Leadership	23





Introduction

When Horace Mann founded the normal school movement in 1839, he not only aimed to provide foundational education for teacher training, but he also strived to create a well-educated citizenry that was based on civic duty and ethical standards that complemented our growing democracy. Developing leadership for public purpose is at the forefront of Westfield State University, and we intend to continue to support those learners who wish to positively contribute to the growth of our nation.

Recognizing the critical role of technology in modern education, Westfield State will continue to integrate cutting-edge tools into its curricula, such as virtual labs, online collaboration spaces, and Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven support systems. These innovations will not only enhance the learning experience but also prepare our students for a rapidly evolving job market.

Through strategic partnerships with local industries, government organizations, and nonprofit sectors, Westfield State will align its academic programs with emerging workforce needs. By offering internships, cooperative education programs, and industry certifications, we will ensure that our graduates are equipped with the skills necessary to thrive in the Commonwealth's evolving economy.

In five years, we envision Westfield State as a Massachusetts leader in equitable, high-quality education. Our goal is to increase retention and graduation rates among historically underserved populations, expand our workforce-aligned programs, and increase the number of students who engage in community service and civic learning opportunities. These measures will ensure that our University remains a force for good in the lives of our students and the Commonwealth.

The pandemic revealed our ability to adapt and innovate in times of crisis. As we move forward, we will carry these lessons with us, ensuring that flexibility, resilience, and community engagement remain at the core of our educational model. The experiences of the past few years, and the challenges of the present, have deepened our commitment to providing a supportive, inclusive, and adaptable learning environment for all students.



A Message from the President

I am pleased to present Westfield State University's 5-year plan of action. After input from the entire campus, the Board of Trustees, alumni, local community, and the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, four goals were developed by our Strategic Planning Committee and enhanced by the University leadership team to shape and guide our future. Our theme, Infinite Opportunities, mirrors our 185th anniversary campaign, Infinite Possibilities, in which we showcased events focused on leadership, global and cultural alliances, and civic responsibility.

For a public university to be successful, it needs to serve our communities and contribute to the greater good of the region. In the tradition and context of a public university we remain dedicated to excellent teaching, applied research and creativity, the best of service, and community partnerships. This commitment inspires us to develop a community of learners supporting all individuals to reach their peak leadership potential for the public good, and a place where everyone learns and everyone has the opportunity to lead.

Westfield State University has a special history among American institutions of higher education, and our mission and values have been consistent for over 186 years. When Horace Mann founded our institution in 1839, it was the first school in the nation that practiced the understanding that students of any creed, color, gender, or financial standing should have full access to a quality education. These principles are the bedrock of our University. We continue to value engaged citizenry, access, diversity, inclusion, and belonging, and we strive for excellence—creating a solid foundational learning experience for our students, through collaborating, supporting, and engaging with individuals within our communities.

Looking forward to 2029, our strategic plan predicts that we will increase enrollment, and our students, faculty, staff, librarians, and alumni will be engaged in creating a vibrant atmosphere for Westfield State University on and off campus. Our students will be successful in learning, personal growth, and goal achievement. They will be competitive in employment, enjoy social mobility, and our University will be financially stable with updated facilities. Our faculty, librarians, and staff will be supported in their teaching, learning, and professional development, and will continue to be the primary drivers of student success. The University will continue to maintain the highest standards of institutional governance, inspire trust and respect in all the constituencies we serve and uphold our reputation as a dependable partner for innovative collaboration inside and outside the Commonwealth.

As a public higher education leader, I embrace my duty to champion policies and practices that ensure every individual has the opportunity to learn and thrive. My colleagues and I are guided by our shared responsibility and remain committed to advocating for policies that support and advance our campus.

By serving our citizens with a strategic, measured approach in providing a first-rate education, we see INFINITE OPPORTUNITIES for those learners who are driven to succeed and contribute to the health and vitality of their families and our region for decades to come.



Linda Thompson, *President*



Our Mission, Vision, and Values

MISSION

Westfield State University is a public institution offering accessible, quality undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal arts, sciences, and professional studies. Our welcoming community focuses on student engagement and success. We contribute to the economic, social, and cultural growth of the northeast region by developing the knowledge, skills, and character essential for students to become responsible leaders and engaged citizens.

VISION

Westfield State University strives to be the premier public comprehensive institution in the Northeast region through its commitment to student engagement and success.

VALUES

Westfield State University commits to values that strengthen a common bond among all members of our community. These values represent a commitment to others, a commitment to ourselves, and a commitment to a diverse learning environment where everyone is respected.

→ OUR VALUES

Embrace Diversity: We treat all members of our community with dignity and respect.

Build a Strong Community: We are inclusive and ensure equity, supporting the personal development of all community members, and embracing multiple perspectives.

Maintain Excellence and Integrity: We maintain excellence and integrity in all that we do.

Engage in the outside community: We support civic engagement in local, regional, and global initiatives.

Collaborate with each other: We make decisions in a transparent and collaborative manner.

Provide Accessible Education: We commit to providing an accessible, affordable public higher education for all.





Milestones and Timeline

Westfield State University is committed to shaping its future through a collaborative and forward-thinking strategic planning process. Guided by shared values and a vision for long-term success, the University initiated a comprehensive journey to develop its 2025-2029 Strategic Plan. This effort engaged campus stakeholders, leadership, and external experts, ensuring that diverse perspectives were afforded opportunities to shape the institution's goals for the next five years.

The process was inclusive, transparent, and mission-driven, resulting in clear institutional priorities, shaped eventually by the president and her cabinet, focused on academic excellence, student success, research innovation, and community engagement.

Below is a timeline highlighting key involvements and activities in the development of the Strategic Plan:

SEPTEMBER 19, 2023

Board of Trustees visioning session facilitated by SME Strategy Consulting.

SEPTEMBER TO OCTOBER 2023

12 Stakeholder interviews, visioning sessions, 9 campus surveys.

JANUARY 2024

Strategic Plan Committee appointed and charged by the President.

FEBRUARY 5 TO 7, 2024

Strategic Planning Committee 3-day goal setting retreat facilitated by SME Strategy consulting.

FEBRUARY TO JUNE 2024

The Strategic Plan Committee met bi-weekly and gathered feedback through meetings and town halls, and presented a document outlining goals, and actions to the President's Office and Cabinet for the next phase.

MAY 30, 2024

Dr. Richard Ricardi, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Success, Department of Higher Education visit with Strategic Plan Committee.

JUNE TO AUGUST 2024

A Cabinet retreat on June 25, guided by Dr. Richard Freeland, set institutional goals for the next five years, and an update presentation to the Board of Trustees on August 9 led to additional feedback.

SEPTEMBER 3, 2024

Faculty Opening Day Address and conversation.

SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2024

In Fall 2024, University community engaged in presentations of strategic goals for campus feedback, with each vice president assigned a goal for refinement, and the Chief of Staff tasked with introductory comments and convening a draft writing team.

JANUARY 2025

A Cabinet retreat was held to finalize goals and objectives. A writing team drafted the Five-Year Plan, including goals, metrics, and responsibilities.

FEBRUARY 2025

A draft document was submitted to the Board of Trustees for review.

MARCH 24-27, 2025

Feedback sessions with SME Strategy Consulting reviewed draft plan and gathered input from the campus community. Draft submitted to All-University Committee for review.

APRIL 28 TO MAY 6, 2025

The Committee of the MSCA hosted four town halls that focused on each of the four proposed goals.

AUGUST 8, 2025

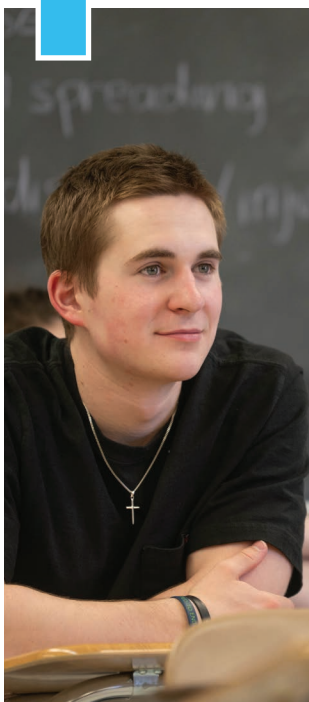
Finalization of the plan and submission to the Board of Trustees.

OCTOBER 2025

Submission to Board of Higher Education.

Strategic Priorities

1 UPDATE CURRICULUM OFFERINGS TO REFLECT TODAY'S WORKFORCE NEEDS



Westfield State University (WSU) is committed to cultivating innovative academic programs that equip students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to excel in today's rapidly evolving world. Achieving academic excellence requires a holistic approach, focusing on both our faculty and curricula. By providing faculty with meaningful professional development opportunities and fostering their engagement with emerging teaching methodologies, technology, and fields, we ensure that faculty are well prepared to inspire and guide students in a dynamic learning environment.

Equally important is the continuous evolution of our curricula, which must reflect relevant cutting-edge content and global perspective. WSU aims to offer programs responsive to the demands of future-focused industries and are Artificial Intelligence (AI) forward, including certificates and stackable credentials that align with in-demand career paths. Additionally, WSU will invest in the tools, technologies, and resources that enhance learning experiences and support student success. WSU ensures students are ready to thrive in the careers of tomorrow through career counseling and academic guidance that anticipates future job market trends.

2 A STUDENT-CENTERED FOCUS ON STUDENT SUCCESS



At Westfield State University (WSU), we believe in the boundless potential of every student to succeed, to thrive in their careers, and to lead within the communities in which they live and work. In addition to its commitment to foster a dynamic academic environment through innovative instruction and comprehensive curricular support, WSU strives to ensure student success by monitoring key metrics such as four- and six-year graduation rates, year-over-year persistence, and retention rates of key demographic groups. WSU also works proactively to close achievement gaps and strengthen academic support services.

Student success at Westfield State University extends beyond the classroom. WSU is dedicated to cultivating a campus culture that nurtures holistic student development and leadership skills that will help our graduates serve their local communities and beyond. Through a wide range of co-curricular and extracurricular programs in partnership with others, we prioritize student well-being and engagement. Our strategies—through programming, technology, and the campus—are intentionally designed to foster a sense of belonging and connection with others.



3 A MULTI-YEAR PLAN ALIGNING RESOURCES TO INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES



Westfield State University (WSU) is committed to student success and innovation through strategic resource alignment. By developing a comprehensive fundraising campaign, strengthening student enrollment and retention efforts, and expanding revenue streams, WSU aims to increase and leverage the resources available to support its academic and operational goals. The University prioritizes the strategic allocation of its human, financial, and physical assets to advance its mission and meet institutional priorities.

Achieving effective resource stewardship requires a data-informed approach to the management of existing resources, as well as the development of forward-thinking plans for talent acquisition, facility improvements, and infrastructure expansion. Additionally, Westfield State University will focus on developing an integrated financial planning process to ensure alignment with the University's strategic objectives. This holistic approach ensures that resources are deployed in ways that drive long-term growth, sustainability, and success for the University and its students.

4 STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING



Westfield State University (WSU) will advance innovation, applied research, and creativity through strategic partnerships with industry, government, higher education institutions—both nationally and globally—and community stakeholders.

By fostering cross-disciplinary collaboration on-and-off campus, the University cultivates vibrant exchanges of ideas through events, networking, and joint initiatives. Westfield State University will actively support faculty innovation and provides dynamic platforms to showcase research and creative work, ensuring that real-world solutions are shared widely and have meaningful impact.

Through these efforts, the University affirms its role as a catalyst for positive change—where academic expertise and community collaboration come together to address the Commonwealth's most pressing challenges and contribute to global progress.

Goals, Objectives, and Actions

Goal 1

FOSTER INNOVATIVE LEARNING

Align institutional resources with innovative and relevant academic programs that equip students with the knowledge, leadership skills, and experiences necessary to thrive in emerging career opportunities and contribute meaningfully to a rapidly changing world.



Objective 1: Support and encourage faculty development in teaching, service, research, and creative activity.

Action 1.1: The Faculty Center will reopen in fall 2025 with a full-time staff director.

Action 1.2: Funding will be provided to incentivize faculty development for utilizing high impact practices and innovative content delivery in Westfield's Integrative Student Experience (WISE) General Education and discipline-specific programs.

Action 1.3: Funding will be provided for Division of Graduate and Continuing Education faculty development related to skills in creating, delivering, and assessing online and in person programs.

Action 1.4: By spring 2026 Academic Affairs will establish faculty recognition awards for advancing teaching, research, and creative activity, advising, and service.

Performance Metrics: Number of faculty development events per year; number of faculty participating in development; number of awards given.





Objective 2: Beginning in fall 2025, create a process to review and revise curricula as disciplines and employer needs change.

Action 2.1: Assessment of WISE General Education has begun, and one learning outcome will be assessed each year.

Action 2.2: By fall 2026, assessment plans will be developed to assess universal and discipline-specific learning outcomes in each major to ensure that students are able to demonstrate skills they will need in their current and future careers to provide economic mobility.

Action 2.3: An evaluation of graduate program design, support services, degrees, certificates, and course offerings will be conducted over FY26 to ensure they are relevant to current employer needs and meet student demand.

Action 2.4: The Academic Program Review and the Annual Report processes will be revised to incorporate evaluation of alumni outcomes and industry trends to ensure all majors are relevant and are preparing students for future careers.

Action 2.5: Funding and other resources will be directed toward academic programs focused on innovative, in-demand, future-focused careers, including AI and other emerging technologies.

Action 2.6: Stand-alone, stackable, and other non-degree certificate programs and credentials, including credit for prior learning, will be created to support the workforce needs of local and regional partners.

Action 2.7: Curricula in each major will provide opportunities for students to engage in undergraduate research and creative activity and other high impact practices.

Action 2.8: Academic programs will be designed to include the development of leadership competencies and global perspectives.

Performance Metrics: Number of assessments done and results; number of departments assessing their learning outcomes and results; number of new programs; number of majors revised; number of certificates created; number of student projects per year; number of internships per year.

Goals, Objectives, and Actions

Objective 3: Collect, analyze, and use data to enhance decision quality.

Action 3.1: The University will conduct a self-assessment of institutional data analytics capabilities related to student success with Huron Consulting.

Action 3.2: Data collection needs will be evaluated, including a review of aligning the Strategic Plan, Academic Program Review, Annual Reports, NECHE accreditation, and other data collection processes.

Action 3.3: The University will establish a centralized data access site for institutional data, with common data definitions, available to users across campus (with consideration of privacy needs and permission levels).

Action 3.4: By fall 2026 predictive models for student success will be strengthened to better target enhanced intervention to improve retention, graduation rates, and other measures of student success.

Performance Metrics: Results of self-study; retention rate; graduation rate; credit completion.

Objective 4: Provide resources to faculty and staff to enhance the quality of advising.

Action 4.1: A dual advising program will be implemented for all first- and second-year students beginning in fall 2025, so that each student will have both a faculty advisor and a professional advisor.

Action 4.2: Beginning fall 2025 advising workshops will be run through the Faculty Center that will allow faculty members to receive training and a Certificate in Advising.

Action 4.3: By fall 2027 “Westfield in 4” plans will be created for each major and shared with students and faculty.

Action 4.4: Academic Early alert programs, WSU 360 (EAB Starfish) will be utilized to identify high risk students and develop tailored intervention strategies by risk category (Academic, Financial, Well-being, Engagement).

Action 4.5: By fall 2025 undeclared first year students will be assigned a trained faculty advisor, in addition to a professional advisor.

Action 4.6: By fall 2025 academic assessment plans will be implemented to ensure students are receiving high-quality advising in the Advising Office and at the department level.

Performance Metrics: retention rate, graduation rate, credit completion.



Goal 2

ADVANCE STUDENT SUCCESS

Create an environment where every student has the opportunity to access resources, support, and community needed to successfully complete their program, is prepared to find gainful employment after graduation, and is ready to lead in their local and regional communities.



Objective 1: Establish a student-ready campus that prioritizes student success through continuous quality improvement and decision-making informed by ongoing student input and engagement.

Action 1.1: By the end of the 2025-26 Academic Year, engage all University recognized organizations in a review of curricular and co-curricular experiences through structured feedback mechanisms coordinated by the Student Government Association (SGA) and key University committees.

Action 1.2: At the close of the 2026 spring semester SGA will submit a report of findings on student involvement and provide recommendations.

Action 1.3: Work with faculty to develop a credit-bearing leadership course accessible to all students, to be offered in the fall of 2027.

Action 1.4: By spring 2026 create a task force to review student-led events and campus traditions. Present a report of findings and recommendations to the campus by May 2026.

Action 1.5: By spring 2026 establish base-line data to track student success metrics, such as first-year retention, credit accumulation, and four- and six-year graduation rates.

Performance Metrics: Number of organizations participating, retention data including four- and six-year graduation rates, retention (fall/spring, year over year), equity indexes for target populations.

Goals, Objectives, and Actions

Objective 2: Foster a culture of collaboration and engagement empowering students, faculty, and staff to actively contribute to and shape the life of the University community.

Action 2.1: By spring 2026 appoint a campus community committee that will plan two major University engagements each academic year.

Action 2.2: Create a Master Calendar of events throughout the year.

Action 2.3: By fall 2025 implement a redesigned academic support model that combines faculty mentorship with professional advising.

Action 2.4: By fall 2025 initiate peer mentorship programs across all academic units to support students with additional needs.

Action 2.5: By December 2025 establish a schedule to administer an annual survey to assess student engagement and campus climate.

Action 2.6: By December 2025 develop a schedule of training for campus programming units to utilize a centralized campus calendar to improve communication and event participation.

Performance Metrics: Committee appointment complete, participation rates in redesigned model, peer mentoring program started (participation), survey completion rate, participation in training.

Objective 3: Promote a holistic model of student well-being where all University programs and services work cooperatively to support students.

Action 3.1: By spring 2026 identify and catalog spaces, activities, and programs that support physical and mental health.

Action 3.2: By fall 2025 expand wellness services to meet the needs of graduate, part-time, and off-campus students.

Action 3.3: By fall 2026 coordinate and integrate wellness-focused campus resources—such as the Health Center; Counseling Center; Center for Belonging, Inclusion, and Learning; Fitness Center; Dining Services; and Interfaith Center—to provide a holistic approach to student well-being.

Action 3.4: Beginning the spring of 2026, the Dean of Students and the Assistant Provost for Academic Excellence and Retention will combine existing students of concern alert and monitoring systems.

Performance Metrics: completed inventory of wellness spaces.



Objective 4: Increase new student enrollments by identifying and investing in new programs that showcase diverse student experiences.

Action 4.1: By fall 2025 present a long-term strategic enrollment plan to identify new cohorts of students eligible to enroll at the University.

Action 4.2: By fall of 2026 Athletics and recreation will explore the feasibility of adding two new athletic and/or recreational programs.

Action 4.3: By summer 2026 present a review of current residential Living and Learning Communities (LLCs), with a focus on expansion.

Performance Metrics: Targets in strategic enrollment plan (percentages applications, acceptances admits), recruiting targets (geographical areas, diverse populations, new tactics, and strategies and programs), financial aid support targets.



Goals, Objectives, and Actions

Goal 3

OPTIMIZE STEWARDSHIP OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

Strengthen, broaden, and enhance the use of campus resources by strategically aligning human, financial, and facilities to the University's institutional priorities.

Objective 1: Strengthen and align personnel resources to support the university's goals.

Develop a comprehensive plan to align staffing resources with shifting needs of the University, enhance recruitment and retention of current and prospective employees, and focus on enhancing the skill development of employees. Work collaboratively to build a strong institutional culture by enhancing the employee experience, promoting core institutional values, and fostering connections among employees.

Action 1.1: Review staffing resources to align with institutional priorities and enhance quality student experiences.

Action 1.2: Develop a multi-year strategic talent acquisition and engagement plan for the purposes of aligning staffing resources with the shifting needs of the University, strengthening applicant pools, increasing employee retention particularly within the first 12 months of employment, and supporting employees' ongoing leadership development. Specific initiatives include a peer-to-peer onboarding program and a diverse suite of professional development opportunities that prioritizes leadership cultivation and conflict transformation, and additional opportunities to recognize and reward employees' accomplishments.

Action 1.3: Secure a vendor partner during FY26 to conduct a compensation analysis study including an evaluation of the University's compensation guidelines and practices. FY27 deliverables include benchmarking insights, internal pay equity analysis, comparable jobs identification, and recommendations for implementation.

Action 1.4: Secure a vendor partner during FY26 or FY27 to develop, administer, and report key findings and recommendations from a biennial employee survey.

Action 1.5: Collaborate with senior leadership to introduce Leadership for Public Purpose to employees.

Action 1.6: Develop a multi-year institutional plan to strengthen employee culture.



Objective 2: Build financial foundations by improving fiscal stewardship and campus knowledge of our financial structure and increase engagement with financial processes through consistent employee communication, training, and participation.

Action 2.1: Develop a strategic financial communications plan (e.g., Finance Town Hall once per semester, quarterly budget communications) that increases fiscal knowledge campus wide. The communication plan should be developed to reach all levels of campus.

Action 2.2: By FY26 improve fiscal stewardship and decision-making practices for campus leaders, and financial/analytical, and technical skills for budget developers by creating a financial training program including budgeting, reporting, purchasing and accounting.

Objective 3: Enhance management of financial resources by providing consistent, responsible, data-informed, and transparent management of all existing financial resources in FY2027 through integrated multi-year strategic planning and evaluation; ensure an annual balanced budget. By FY30, Westfield State will have three years of results that will allow the University to utilize resources within 2-3 percent of the annual operating budget.

Action 3.1: Develop a five-year financial forecast incorporating the Strategic Plan, part of the NECHE standard that reflects major campus decisions, and key performance indicators, integrating internal information from major units as well as external trends in higher education.

Action 3.2: Establish a plan that leverages the strategic use of campus reserves for projects that create positive impacts for students or revenue growth, while preserving adequate reserve levels for long-term economic health.

Action 3.3: Require use of proformas, business cases, and other data-informed methods for requesting resources that utilize a Return on Investment model.

Action 3.4: Implement a campus process that considers using a budget relieving approach, versus additive, from sources such as the Foundation, grants, and external funding sources.

Action 3.5: Implement a financial data warehouse to support integrated financial reporting.

Action 3.6: Develop an integrated enrollment and retention plan.



Objective 4: Implement a comprehensive fundraising campaign to increase the Westfield State University Foundation's contribution to the University. Raise \$10 million by the end of FY30, increasing the Foundation's commitment to the University by 50 percent by FY30.

Action 4.1: Establish the financial goal and fundraising priorities for a comprehensive campaign in FY26.

Action 4.2: Engage the Board of Trustees and Foundation Board to allocate the human and consulting resources needed to successfully execute a campaign by fall 2026.

Action 4.3: Work with a community of internal and external stakeholders to develop a multi-faceted case for support and create a campaign committee that will advance the campaign's fundraising priorities and fundraising goal by fall 2026.

Action 4.4: Launch and manage the comprehensive capital campaign.

Objective 5: Encourage a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship at all levels of the institution. Campus stakeholders will develop a multi-year plan to increase non-traditional revenue (e.g., grants, conferences/events, and Division of Graduate and Continuing Education) each year by 10 to 15 percent by FY31 using FY25 as baseline.

Action 5.1: By properly resourcing grants and sponsored programs to support prospective research, proposal development, and grant cycle management, grant funding will increase by 15 percent year over year; review indirect cost policy in FY26.

Action 5.2: Conference and event revenue will increase by 10 percent year over year, with a base of \$350,000, through the use of campus-wide integrated planning and University asset management.

Action 5.3: Continue to expand community partnerships, local government, and business/industry collaborations to increase private investments, externally funded internships, and WSU's visibility and prestige.

Action 5.4: Develop new programming that supports current market labor trends and create flexible pathways for non-traditional students consistent with the mission of the University. Based on data and market analysis, provide seed funding to invest in new opportunities that support revenue growth by five percent per year.





Objective 6: Increase campus commitment and resources that ensure a living, learning, and working environment that is clean, safe, and modernized, creating a competitive advantage by 2030, and by reducing deferred maintenance by 20 percent.

Action 6.1: Invest in the necessary technology and infrastructure to increase cyber security, improve connectivity across the campus, and modernize classroom technology through funding the five-year technology plan including expanding cloud-based services.

Action 6.2: Finalize the Campus Master Plan to support progress to make necessary strategic improvements to facilities. Prioritize and invest in campus beautification to create landscape and external spaces that are welcoming, attractive, and impressive to potential new students and families. Enhance student-centric campus grounds, including outdoor areas for student recreation and gathering.

Action 6.3: Maintain and update the five-year critical repair plan and increase financial commitment (campus, state, or external) to complete capital projects that decrease deferred maintenance.

Action 6.4: Develop long-term strategies which ensure the financial viability of the residence hall system, which is an integral element of the student experience. Create an incentive program to increase occupancy and meal plan participation. Consider expanding scholarships for housing and dining through the foundation and other sources.

Action 6.5: Formalize the University's ongoing commitment to sustainability strategies through funding of an ongoing and dedicated staffing model and operational funding as well as seeking external guidance from national organizations (e.g., Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education).

Performance Metrics: Composite Financial Index, Change in Available Cash Reserves, Total Expenses per Student, Total Deferred Maintenance or FCI Index, Annual CGCE Revenue, Annual Investments in Information Technology, Culture Survey Changes (bi-annual), Foundation Revenue, Employee Retention Rate, Utilization of Financial Resources, Residence Hall Occupancy Rates.

Goals, Objectives, and Actions

Goal 4

AMPLIFY INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT AND INFLUENCE

Foster a vibrant community of engaged scholars and learners who drive innovation, applied research, and creativity through purposeful scholarship and transformative partnerships.



Objective 1: Strengthen impact through strategic partnerships (Government, Community, Industry, and Internal Constituents) to foster innovation.

Action 1.1: Create an Institute of Innovation. Establish an Innovation Network in FY26, develop a five-year plan in FY27, and implement Institute in FY28.

Action 1.2: Host two networking events in FY26, increase to 4 in spring 2027, culminating with an innovation conference in May which will include business and community partners.

Action 1.3: In FY26 facilitate two cross-institutional partnerships by establishing programs with other universities, national and internal, industry leaders, and nonprofits to encourage shared efforts and resource exchange.

Action 1.4: In FY26 create an Alumni Mentorship Program pairing junior Westfield State students with experienced mentors, including alumni, who can guide them in research innovation and professional development.

Action 1.5: Establish three industry and academic partnerships by forming advisory boards within key majors to foster relationships between campus leaders and industry leaders in the local area.

Performance metrics based on meeting deadlines, number of events hosted, programs established, and number of community partnerships.





Objective 2: Cultivate support to address local, state, and regional needs through applied research, entrepreneurship, and societal application.

Action 2.1: Increase the number of grant applications by 10% each year over the five-year period to 50%. The total dollar amount is \$1 million over five years.

Action 2.2: Increase the number of institutional research partners by two each year beginning in FY26.

Action 2.3 Develop a recognition program in FY26, awarded annually each year, highlighting three institutional partners.

Performance Metrics: Based on number of grants, increased dollar amount, increased number of institutional partners, and development of recognition program and number of awards.

Objective 3: Strengthen platforms for community engagement and disseminating research and creative work.

Action 3.1: By FY 26, create monthly information mailers to promote public engagement.

Action 3.2: By FY 26, host two speaker series, public lectures, webinars, or outreach events each semester.

Action 3.3: Increase marketing and communication support for external partnership activities by 25% each year.

Performance Metrics: Measured against established benchmarks, number of events, increase in Westfield State exposure.

Aligning Strategic Priorities with Statewide System Initiatives



In developing our four strategic goals and priorities Westfield State University worked to align directly with the overarching Massachusetts Board of Higher Education-Department of Higher Education system-wide strategic initiatives with a focus on Student Success and Financial Aid, Economic Mobility, Public Good, and Innovation. The University's efforts in fostering innovative learning, supporting student success, aligning resources, and engaging with the community demonstrate a strong alignment with the Commonwealth's vision for an affordable, sustainable and equitable public higher education system that contributes to a robust workforce and an engaged citizenry.

OVERARCHING SYSTEM-WIDE PRIORITIES

Student Success and Financial Aid: Focusing on student outcomes and improving access to financial assistance.

Westfield State University actions:

- Track student success metrics, such as first-year retention, credit accumulation, and four- and six-year graduation rates, to ensure students are progressing towards degree completion.
- Expand wellness services to meet the needs of graduate, part-time, and off-campus students.
- Administer an annual survey to assess student engagement and inform inclusive practices.
- Develop funding opportunities for projects by partnering with government agencies, foundations, and private industry to create funding for projects that have practical, community-oriented applications. The University aims to increase the number of grant awards by 50 percent over a five-year period while increasing the dollar amount to \$1 million annually.

Economic Mobility: Promoting pathways to economic success for students through education.

Westfield State University actions:

- Develop a credit-bearing leadership course accessible to all students.
- Cultivate and support a culture of applied research, entrepreneurship, and societal application.





Public Good: Emphasizing the broader societal benefits of higher education.

Westfield State University actions:

- Create stand-alone, stackable, and other non-degree certificate programs and credentials, including credit for prior learning, to support the workforce needs of local and regional partners.
- Continue to expand community partnerships, local government, and business/industry collaborations to increase private investments, externally funded internships, and WSU's visibility and prestige.
- Conduct an evaluation of graduate program design, support services, degrees, certificates, and course offerings over the 2025-26 Academic Year to ensure they are relevant to current employer needs and meet student demand.
- Promote public engagement through applied research that addresses societal needs. Host annual speaker series, public lectures, webinars, and outreach events where we bring important topics to this region to engage with the external community, and scholars can highlight their work to diverse audiences, encouraging community involvement and awareness.

Innovation: Encouraging and supporting innovation within the public higher education system.

Westfield State University actions:

- Provide funding to incentivize faculty development for utilizing high impact practices and innovative content delivery in the WISE General Education and discipline-specific programs.
- Create an Institute of Innovation that will direct and support Westfield State University's innovation ecosystem, coordinating the efforts of an innovation network of students, faculty, staff, advisory board members, and strategic community partners.
- Invest in the necessary technology and infrastructure to increase cyber security, improve connectivity across the campus, and modernize classroom technology through funding the five-year technology plan including evaluating cloud-based services.
- Evaluate data collection needs, including a review of Strategic Plan alignment, Academic Program Review, Annual Reports, NECHE accreditation, and other data collection processes.
- Provide marketing and media support for research outreach. Offer resources and opportunities to help researchers present their work in accessible formats such as blogs, podcasts, or video series to highlight on our website and other venues to reach a wider audience.

Strategic Planning Committee

Westfield State's Strategic Planning Committee included representation of departments from across the University campus. The committee met bi-weekly from February to June 2024 together, they embodied a cohesive steering group team dedicated to transparency and inclusive idea development. The committee developed the initial goal concepts and objectives that laid the foundation for the 2025-2029 strategic plan. We are indebted to them for their contributions and engagement. The Committee was co-chaired by Dr. Keven Hearn, vice president of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, and Dr. Sabine Klein, associate dean of Academic Affairs.

Strategic Planning Committee Members

Ms. Amber Monroe
*User Experience Librarian
and Head of Access Services*

Ms. Audrey Antosz
*Administrative Assistant, Sports
Medicine & Human Performance*

Ms. Carolyn Healey
*Administrative Assistant, Ethnic &
Gender Studies, Sociology, Hispanic
and Liberal/Interdisciplinary Studies*

Ms. Jessica Tansey
*Assistant Dean, Graduate
and Continuing Education*

Dr. Josh Hettrick
*Associate Director
of Space Management*

Dr. Kevin Hearn
*Vice President of Enrollment
Management and Student Affairs*

Laura Blockel
*Director of Corporate and Foundation
Grants, Institutional Advancement*

Ms. Leah Nielsen
*Associate Professor of Creative
Writing, Department of English*

Dr. Leslie Rice
*Executive Director of
Communication, Marketing,
and Branding*

Mr. Luis Gonzalez
Maintainer, Dower Center

Dr. Margot Hennessy
*Professor, Department of
Ethnic and Gender Studies*

Ms. Maria Feuerstein
*Associate Vice President of Strategic
Finance & Institutional Planning*

Ms. Marlee Berg-Haryasz
*Assistant Director of Student-Athlete
Well-Being, Recruitment & Retention;
Head Men's and Women's Cross
Country Coach; Assistant Men's &
Women's Track and Field Coach*

Mr. Matt Dellea
*Director of Student Activities,
Involvement and Leadership*

Dr. Max Saito
*Professor,
Department of Communication*

Mr. Michael Mazeika
Director of Undergraduate Admission

Capt. Mike Foyle
Assistant Director of University Police

Ms. Nicole West
*Director of the Course Achievement,
Retention & Engagement Center*

Dr. Paul Cacolice
*Associate Professor,
Department of Sports Medicine
and Human Performance*

Dr. Sabine Klein
*Interim Dean,
College of Arts and Sciences*

Mr. Sherard Johnson
*Assistant Practicum Education
Director, Department of Social Work*

Ms. Sierra Alexander
*Diversity and Inclusion
Senior Program Coordinator*

Dr. Susan McDiarmid
*Director of Clinical Education
and Associate Professor,
Physician Assistant Program*

Dr. Susanne Chuku
Professor, Department of Economics

Ms. Alexis Pratt
Student Representative

Mr. Daniel Currier
*Student Trustee and Student
Government Association
Representative*





Westfield State University Board of Trustees

Mr. Ali Salehi, *Chair*

Mr. Melissa Alvarado '99, *Vice Chair*

Dr. Gloria Williams '77, *Secretary*

Mr. Daniel Currier, *Student Trustee*

Mr. George Gilmer '92

Ms. Theresa Jasmin

Ms. Tessa Lucey '89

Mr. Chris Montemayor '90, '09, *Alumni Trustee*

Mr. Michael O'Rourke '73

Mr. Jay Queenin

Hon. William Reichelt '09

President's Cabinet Members

Dr. Michael Freeman
*Special Assistant to the President on
University Strategies and Chief of Staff*

Dr. Kevin Hearn
*Vice President for Enrollment
Management and Student Affairs*

Mr. Richard Lenfest
Athletics Director

Ms. Lisa McMahon
*Interim Vice President for
Institutional Advancement*

Ms. Melinda Phelps
*General Counsel and Vice President for
Government and Community Relations*

Dr. William Salka
Provost and Executive Vice President

Mr. Stephen Taksar
Vice President for Administration and Finance

All-University Committee

Dr. Jennifer DiGrazia
Professor, Department of English Department

Dr. Joseph Camilleri
Professor, Department of Psychology

Dr. Chalet Seidel
Associate Professor, Department of English

Dr. Jesse Johnson
Associate Professor, Department of Mathematics

Mr. Brian Hubbard
Associate Librarian, Ely Library

Mr. Joseph A. (Jay) Leonard
*Assistant Professor, Department of
Marketing and Management*

Dr. Leonardo Andrade
Associate Professor, Department of Psychology

Dr. Marsha Marotta
Professor, Department of Political Science

Dr. William Salka,
Provost and Executive Vice President

Dr. Azanda Seymour
*Executive Director, Center for
Student Success and Engagement*

Mr. Joseph Bonilla '25
Student Government Association Representative



WESTFIELD STATE
UNIVERSITY



Review of the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan: Goal 1

August 8, 2025



Goal 1: Foster Innovative Learning

Align institutional resources with innovative and relevant academic programs that equip students with the skills needed to have successful careers.

Fit with WSU's Mission

This goal serves several purposes to enhance Admissions and Retention

- Ensure every major is relevant and viable into the future by linking skills developed in that major to careers.
- Provide training for faculty to teach those skills and improve advising.
- Utilize market data to revise existing programs and create new ones.

Objectives

- Objective 1: Support and encourage faculty development in teaching, service, research and creative activity.
- Objective 2: Create a process to review and revise curricula as disciplines and employer needs change.
- Objective 3: Collect, analyze and use data to enhance decision quality.
- Objective 4: Provide resources to faculty and staff to enhance the quality of advising.

Performance Measures/KPIs

- Retention and Graduation Rates
- Number of majors revised
- Number of certificates created
- Number of high impact practices embedded in courses
- Number of faculty participating in professional development opportunities

The Dream Team

- Brian Jennings, Associate Provost
- Hillary Sackett-Taylor, Assistant Provost for Educational Excellence and Retention
- Nora Padykula, Dean, Division of Graduate & Continuing Education
- Mirley Balasubramanya (Bala), Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
- Kimberly Sherman, Dean, College of Professional Studies



Review of the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan: Goal II

August 8, 2025



Goal II: ADVANCE STUDENT SUCCESS

Create an environment where every student can access the resources, support, and community needed to successfully complete their program, is prepared to find gainful employment after graduation, and is ready to lead in their local and regional communities.

- Resident and commuter
- Day and evening
- Undergraduate and graduate
- Full and part-time

Goal II: Objectives

- Objective 1: Establish a student-ready campus that prioritizes student success through continuous quality improvement and decision-making informed by ongoing student input and engagement.
- Objective 2: Foster a culture of collaboration and engagement empowering students, faculty, and staff to actively contribute to and shape the life of the University community.

Goal II: Objectives

- Objective 3: Promote a holistic model of student well-being where all University programs and services work cooperatively to support students.
- Objective 4: Increase new student admissions by identifying and investing in new programs that showcase student experiences.

Goal II: Performance Metrics

- 1) Number of students & organizations participating in strategic initiatives
- 2) Number of administrators, staff and faculty participating in strategic initiatives
- 3) Strategic Enrollment Plan and metrics (applications, accepts, yield, etc...)
- 4) Retention rates
- 5) 4 & 6-year graduation rates
- 6) Student feedback
 - a) Annual engagement / satisfaction surveys
 - b) Peer mentoring programs
 - c) Student monitoring system data
 - d) Student
- 7) Programs
 - Number, number jointly sponsored, number of attendees, evaluations, etc...



Review of the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan: Goal 3 Institutional Resources

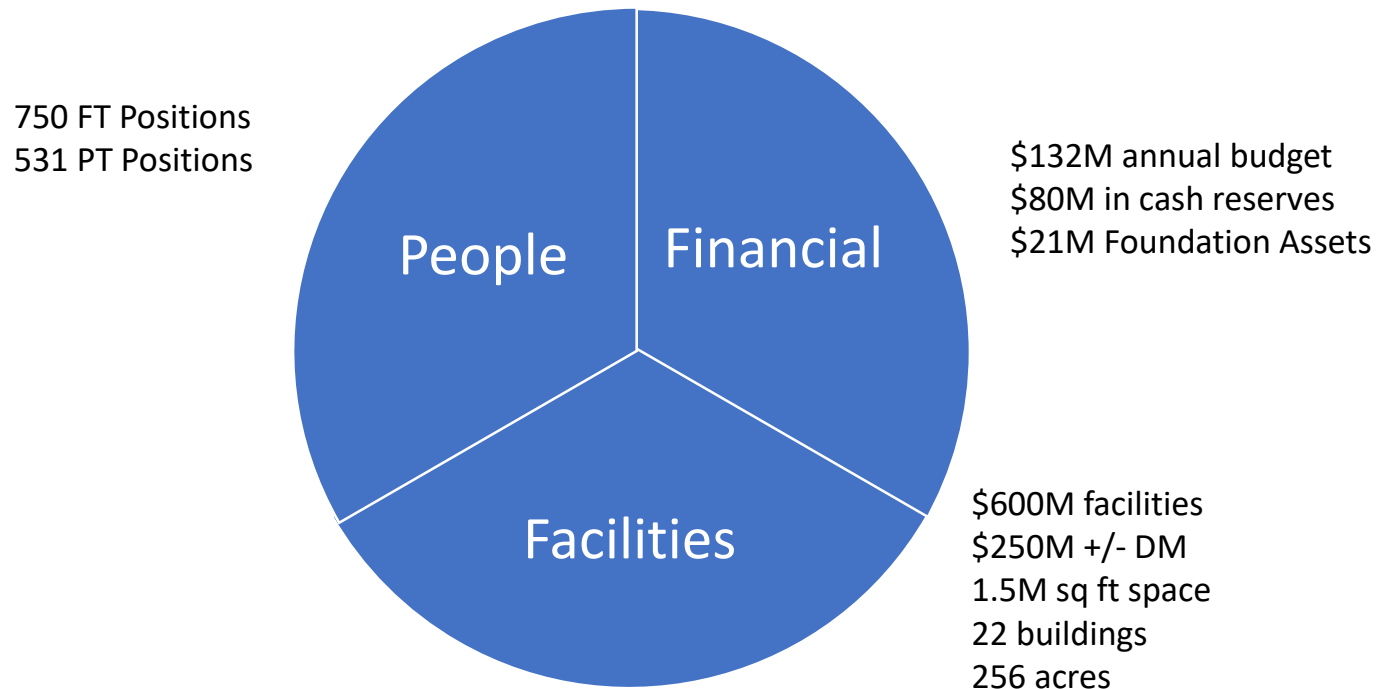
August 8, 2025



Goal 3 – Optimize Stewardship of Campus Resources

Strengthen, broaden and enhance the use of campus resources by strategically aligning human, financial, and facilities to the University's institutional priorities.

What are the Campus Resources?



Key Campus Resource Themes

Human Resources

- Human Resources
 - Support departmental needs to address staffing issues
 - Recruitment, retention, recognition
 - Leadership development and training
 - Data informed processes
 - Campus culture
 - Support Leadership for Public Purpose
 - Volunteers/boards

Key Campus Resource Themes

Financial

- Financial
 - Education/training/communication
 - Systems and data management (IT)
 - Planning and financial reporting
 - Process improvements/accountability
 - Strategic investments
 - Multi-year (and integrated) planning
 - Diversify revenue streams

Key Campus Resource Themes

Facilities

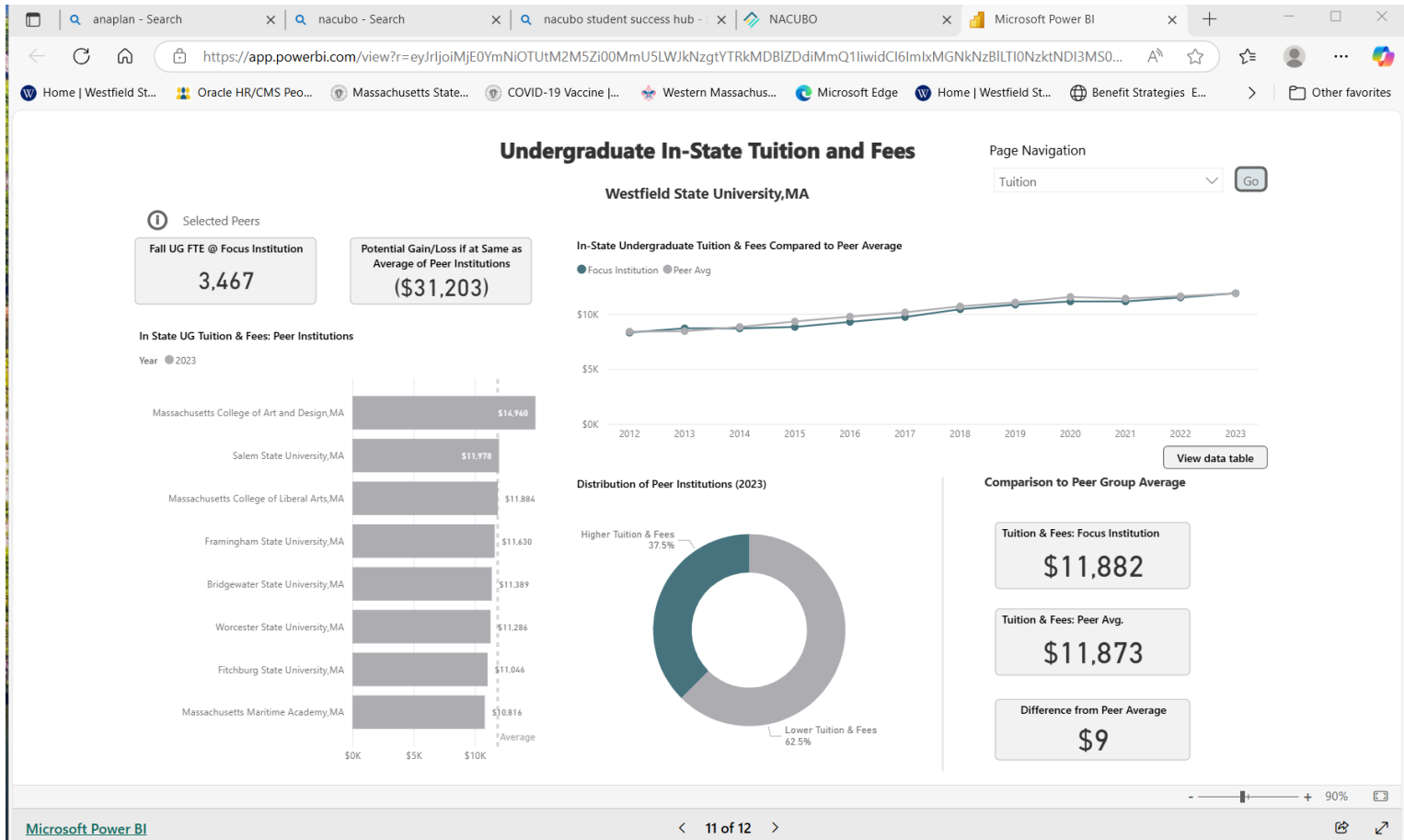
- Information Technology (network infrastructure, cyber, connectivity, AI impact)
- Capital projects/BRIGHT Act/large & small
- Deferred maintenance; decarbonization
- Student spaces (Ely), Residence halls, and Athletic Spaces
- Space utilization
- Sustainability
- Surplus property

The BRIGHT Act – Financing Higher Ed Capital

- **\$2.5 billion** for the University of Massachusetts system, state universities and community colleges to address deferred maintenance, decarbonize and modernize facilities, construct major capital projects, and manage land and buildings to meet institutional goals.
- **\$500 M** for targeted funding for other initiatives, including:
 - **\$100 M** in planning costs for disposition/acquisition of land & buildings to support **housing development**
 - **\$170 M** for smaller modernization projects, such as:
 - Renovating and modernizing labs
 - Expanding collaborations between community colleges and secondary schools
 - Upgrading facilities related to student health, mental health, wellness, and safety
 - **\$30 M** for development of campus master plans to align investments with long-term goals and ensure optimal use of new resources
 - **\$20 M** for technology projects, including online and hybrid workspaces & shared enterprise systems
 - **\$100 M** for the **Workforce Skills Capital** grant program to support its continued success

Financial Dashboard - NACUBO

Tuition and Fee Comparison



Preliminary Strategic Plan Financial Metrics

			DRAFT	DRAFT				Preliminary
Number	KPI	Strategic Objective	Strategic Question	Formula	Frequency	Baseline	Goal	Indicator
1	Composite Financial Index	Maintain strong financial position based on multiple ratios for debt, liquidity, net income	Is the univeristy financially stable compared to peers or benchmarks?	Use annual ratio analysis which combines 4 key ratios develop the CFI index.	Annual	FY25	Maintain CFI of 3 or above.	
2	Available Cash Reserves	Management of Financial Resources (#3)	Are available cash reserves increasing or decreasing year over year?	Total cash reserves less commitments = Available cash	Quarterly	FY25	Maintain appropriate level of cash reserves.	
3	DGCE Program Growth	Non-traditional Revenue (#5)	Increase revenue in non-traditional programs and services.	Compare non-traditional revenue to prior year non-traditional revenue	Annual	FY25	10%increase year over year	
4	Information Technology Investments	Capital Investment and Deferred Mainteance (#6)	Is the university investing more in critical areas of technology than prior year based on the campus technology plan?	Total dollars spent on non-personnel technology expenditures.	Annual	FY25	20%of funding gap for needed IT investments.	
5	Fundraising Revenues	Fundraising Campaign (#4)	Progress towards meeting fundraising goal.	Dollars raised vs goal	Annual	FY26	\$10M	
6	Deferred Maintenance Investment vs Backlog	Capital Investment and Deferred Mainteance (#6)	Is the university making progress to reduce overall deferred maintenance?	Total amounts spent on annual deferred maintenance divided by total deferred maintenance	Annual	FY25	Total Deferred Mainteance as % of Replacement Value.	
7	Employee Retention Rate	Strengthen and Align personnel resources	Are new employees staying at the university?	Employees leaving in first 12 months vs total employees.	Quarterly	FY25	Reduce turnover	
8	Residence Hall Occupancy Rate	Capital Investment and Deferred Mainteance (#6)	Can the residence hall system be self sustaining and at least breakeven?	Vacant beds as a percent of total available beds.	Semester	FY25	Increase occupany rate over prior year	
9	Tuition Discount Rate	Management of Financial Resources (#3)	Maintain affordability for students and optimize size of incoming class.	Institutional financial aid divided by total tuition and fees	Semester	FY25	Maintain a competative discount rate.	
10	Utilization of Financial Resources	Management of Financial Resources (#3)	Is campus utilizing its resources as planned?	Financial gap between total revenues and expenses; calculate net gap as percent of revenue.	Annual	FY25	Minimize gap between revenues and expenses to less than 2%	



Thank you

Financial Dashboard - NACUBO

Institutional Trend Summary (IPEDS 2023)

TRIVIUM BI

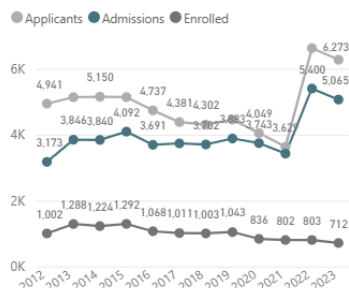
Institution Summary

Westfield State University, MA

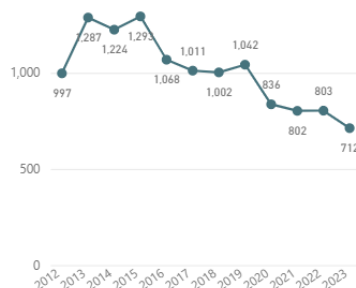
Page Navigation

Institution Summary Go

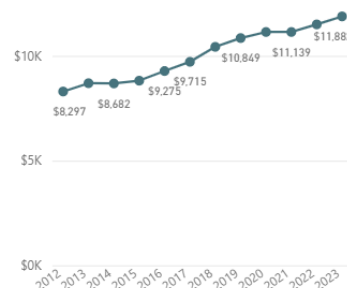
Applicants, Admitted, Enrolled



First Time in College Enrollment



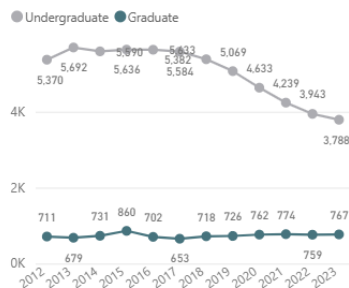
Published in-state tuition & fees



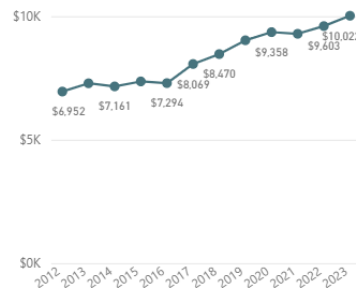
Avg. institutional grant aid to FTFT undergrads



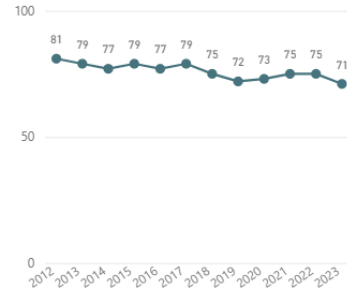
Undergraduate and Graduate Enrollment



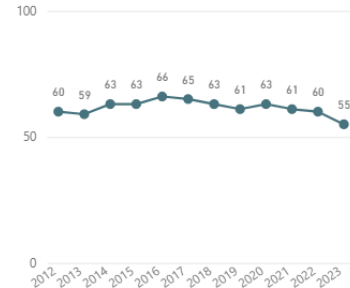
Net Revenue per FTE



Full-time Retention Rate

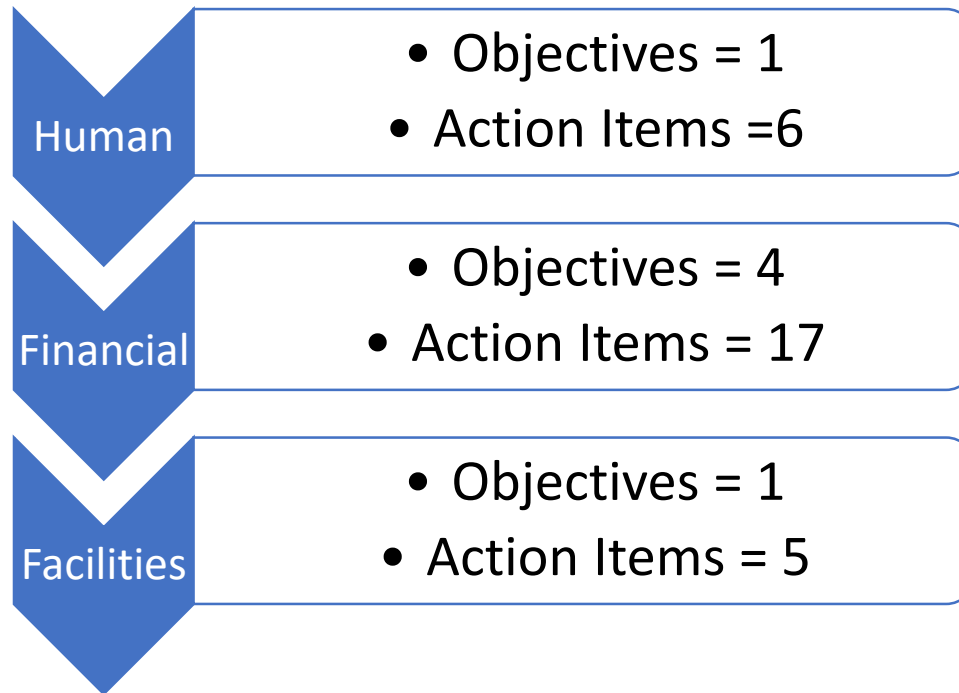


Overall Graduation Rate



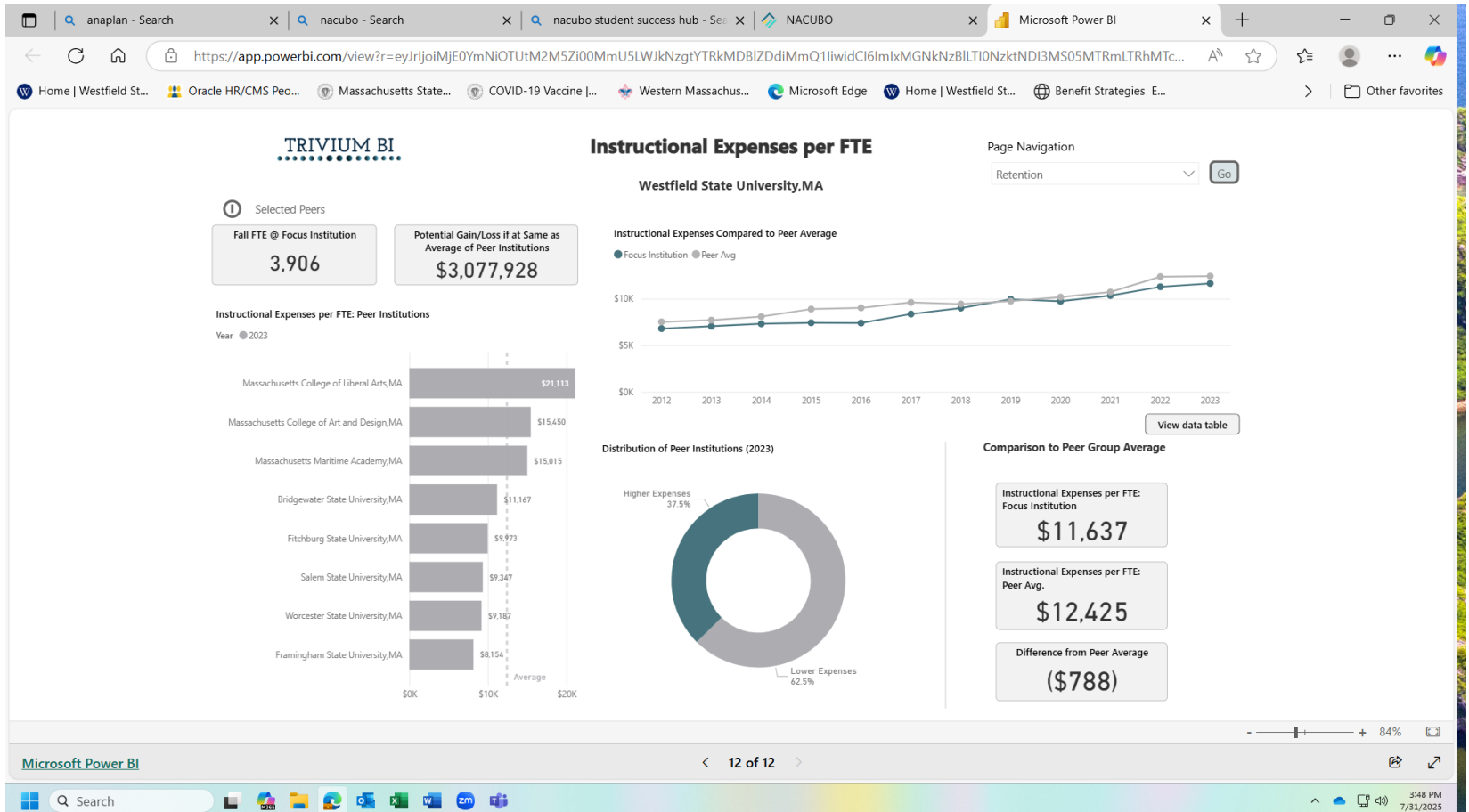
Structure of Goal 3

Institutional Resources



Financial Dashboard - NACUBO

Instructional Expenses/FTE



STRATEGIC PLAN

2025 – 2029

GOAL 4

Infinite Opportunities



GOAL 4: AMPLIFY INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT AND INFLUENCE

Foster a vibrant community of engaged scholars and learners who drive innovation, applied research, and creativity through purposeful scholarship and transformative partnerships.



- **AMPLIFY INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT AND INFLUENCE**
- **Envision Westfield State as a leader**
- **Goal to increase retention and graduation rates among historically underserved populations**
- **Expand our workforce-aligned programs**
- **Increase the number of students who engage in community service and civic learning opportunities**

AMPLIFY INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT AND INFLUENCE

- Civic engagement, community engagement, the power of connection
- Opportunity to experience how “COMMUNITY” works
- How real-world problems are addressed within organizations, industry, government and non-profits.

Goal 4: THREE OBJECTIVES

AMPLIFY INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT AND INFLUENCE

OBJECTIVE 1: Strengthen impact through strategic partnerships (*Government, Community, Industry, and Internal Constituents*) to foster innovation.

OBJECTIVE 2: Cultivate support to address local, state and regional needs through applied research, entrepreneurship and societal application.

OBJECTIVE 3: Strengthen platforms for community engagement and disseminating research and creative work.

GOAL 4 aligns with:

University Mission, Vision and Values,

Strategic Priorities especially “Strengthening partnerships for experimental learning”

Statewide System Initiatives: Student Success, Innovation, Economic Mobility, Public Good



GOAL 4: AMPLIFY INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT AND INFLUENCE

- **Objectives**
- **Actions**
- **Performance Metrics**

Goal 4 requires us to:

- Be more intentional - have conversations
- Evaluate the many ways we presently engage our students, faculty and staff
- Expand and formalize impactful opportunities across disciplines
- **Solidify relationships, to grow strategic partnerships, cultivate support and resources both from and for our communities, industries, hospitals, non-profits and government partners.**



Goal 4: Performance Metrics/KPI's

of Community Partnerships

Student Engaged in initiatives

Programs Established

Grants Increased / Increased \$

Institute of Innovation

Advisory Boards

Recognition Program

Increased WSU Exposure



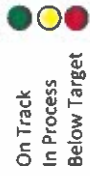
GOAL 4

**Presents opportunities for our
campus community to be strategic,
targeted, intentional and deliberate in
AMPLIFYING INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT
AND INFLUENCE!**



Thank you





Westfield State University KPI Dashboard

Category	KPI	Status	Progress	Baseline	Target
Enrollment	Total New Students	In Process	<div><div></div></div>	1076	
Student Success	1st and 2nd Year Retention	In Process	<div><div></div></div>	71%	
Student Success	6-Year Graduation Rate	In Process	<div><div></div></div>	55%	
Student Success	Post-Graduation Outcomes	In Process	<div><div></div></div>		
University	Faculty Engagement	In Process	<div><div></div></div>		
Finance	Composite Financial Index	In Process	<div><div></div></div>	3.0	>3.0
Finance	Available Cash Reserves	In Process	<div><div></div></div>	75M	75M
Finance	DGCE Revenue Growth	In Process	<div><div></div></div>	FY25 Total	+10%
Advancement	Total Fundraising Revenues	In Process	<div><div></div></div>	2.397M	
Advancement	Alumni Engagement	In Process	<div><div></div></div>		
Advancement	Total Donors	In Process	<div><div></div></div>	1314	

2024-2025 Board of Trustees Self-Assessment

Overall, Trustees “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with a majority of the statements. Below are the “Don’t Know” and “Disagree” statements. Any statements in **bold*** were found on multiple assessments.

Don’t know statements:

- Board members adhere to protocols for responding to community members and the media.
- Once a decision is made, board members cease debate and uphold the decision of the board.
- The board adequately studies issues prior to board action.
- **The Board self-evaluation process provides useful information on board performance.***
- **The Board has clear protocols for communicating with staff that include the President.***
- Board members keep the president informed of community contacts.
- The board policy manual is current, relevant, and useful.
- The board is aware of the campus governance model and the means through which policy recommendations are vetted through the campus community.
- The board is committed to equal opportunity.
- The board, through its diverse composition, fairly represents the community it serves.

Disagree Statements:

- **The board clearly delegates the administration of the university to the President.***
- The board demonstrates a concern for the success of all students by monitoring broad student learning outcomes.
- The board monitors performance related to safety and security.
- The board monitors performance related to its policies on employment.
- The board understands the budget documents and the fiscal condition of the university
- **The Board spends sufficient time discussing the future direction of the University.***
- The board is knowledgeable about the university’s educational programs and services.
- The board periodically reviews and evaluates its policies.
- The board focuses on policy and strategy in board discussions, not on administrative matters.
- The policy-making process is clear, public and inclusive.
- The board is aware of the campus governance model and the

2024-2025 Board of Trustees Self-Assessment

means through which policy recommendations are vetted through the campus community.

- The board ensures the university regularly evaluates program effectiveness.

Major Accomplishments:

- Continued support of the President as she continued to build her cabinet; growth of the board through onboarding of new trustees; enhanced relationships with external stakeholders
- Identified some archaic policies during meetings that should be rescinded or substantially revised.
- Ensured that the FY25 Budget was realistic.
- Approval of 2025-2030 Strategic Plan's four goals.
- The board members are engaged, informed, collaborative, and respectful. They regularly attend meetings and other events at the University and in support of the University.
- Beginning to use consent agenda.
- The Board positively represents the University on campus, in government, and in the community.
- The Board has contributed to the development of a new strategic plan.
- The Board continues to be supportive of creative and innovative ideas.
- The Board has taken a stronger stance on the financial management of the University and the use of reserves to balance the budget.
- Began using data in presentations more regularly. Filled in some of the open positions and now have a full board that seems to be very engaged. Members attended the national conference and brought knowledge and some best practices for possible future improvement actions back to the full board.
- Financial Oversight: The Board has shown strong financial stewardship by approving operating budgets, reviewing student fees, and overseeing critical construction and renovation projects. These actions have contributed to the university's financial stability and long-term sustainability.
- Academic Programs and Policies: The board approved the new two-college organizational structure, comprising of the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Professional Studies, reflects the Board's commitment to enhancing academic excellence and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration. Additionally, the board's endorsement of strategic initiatives, such as diversity and inclusion efforts, underscores their dedication to creating a vibrant and inclusive academic environment.
- Personnel Management: The Board approved faculty promotions and tenure decisions, recognizing outstanding contributions and reinforcing its commitment to attracting and retaining top talent. These decisions support the professional growth of faculty and staff and contribute to the university's academic mission.
- Enrollment Support: The Board's efforts in creating and revising policies, approving strategies, and prioritizing financial budgets to support robust

2024-2025 Board of Trustees Self-Assessment

enrollment numbers demonstrate their proactive approach to ensuring the continued growth and success of the Westfield State University. By investing in initiatives that attract and retain students, they contribute to the fulfillment of the university's missions in teaching, research, creative endeavor, and service to the public.

- Proactive and creative in recruiting new students.
- Supporting DEI and The Mission of Westfield State University.
- Thinking outside the box to avoid the "cliff."
- Discussing new majors for new opportunities.
- Insisting on a budget process that the collective cabinet provides a balanced budget that will not require the use of reserves to cover shortcomings. We are nearly home on that project of living within our means.
- Pursuing and asking for data, regarding retention, major and course offering to encourage the university to eliminate non-producing offerings and look at course offerings that the region, the industry and the community as a whole need graduates from.
- Working in collaboration with the president to have KPI's that are measurable and accountable for the entire team.
- Facilitated a transparent and conducive environment for the president to build a team, that is strong, collaborative, data driven and not resistant to change.
- Work on behalf of the University and the president with the legislators and the Governor's office on deferred maintenance projects.
- Financial stability has been a major accomplishment.
- In my view, our most significant accomplishment this past year has been supporting the President in hiring new executive-level staff to strengthen her leadership team and better support the university. This has had a noticeable and positive impact on both our meetings and the overall campus atmosphere.
- In 2024 the Board supported the President and Cabinet through continued sensitive employee issues that required time, proactive attention and coordination between the Board, President Thompson and internal and external legal.
- The Board supported the President in funding strategic initiatives designed to improve enrollment and address areas that required attention on the campus.
- Numerous senior level staffing changes occurred in the cabinet in 2024 assisting the President to ensure a seamless process and transition in filling these roles was also a great accomplishment.

Areas of improvement:

- Broader participation in campus activities; more efficient/structured use of board meetings (i.e., not all-day meetings; more data-driven decision making.).
- Committee Structure.
- Budget Understanding.

2024-2025 Board of Trustees Self-Assessment

- Use of meeting time.
- Continue to shift focus to more strategic vs. administrative issues. A change in the Board's structure (fewer committees, for example) could help facilitate this.
- As part of being more strategic, continue to ensure that we are asking difficult questions, such as related to the allocation of resources. Our stronger position on balancing budgets without the use of reserves will likely prompt discussions about the allocation of resources and encourage the University to allocate dollars to the units, areas, programs, etc. that are contributing to our growth. Adoption of this new approach requires the University to share common goals and a common understanding of the challenges (e.g., demographic cliff) that are facing the University.
- I am a proponent of reducing the number of committees and having some of the topics discussed as agenda items rather than as separate committees. Example is JEDI. I think that this is a very important conversation and that we, as a board, need to keep this as a topic that the board discusses regularly and routinely. However, I don't think that it needs a separate committee, and I don't think we need to get as granular at the board level.
- Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives: While the Board has endorsed diversity and inclusion efforts, there is room for further commitment and action in implementing initiatives that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels of the university.
- Financial Management: Continuously refining financial oversight practices and ensuring responsible budgeting and resource allocation can help in maximizing the effectiveness of financial resources and mitigating risks.
- Continued Evaluation and Improvement: Regularly assessing the effectiveness of policies, strategies, initiatives and soliciting feedback from stakeholders can help identify areas for improvement and ensure that the Board remains responsive to the evolving needs of the university community.
- Committee Structure Alignment: The Board could evaluate its committee structure to ensure it aligns with the strategic priorities of the university. This involves reviewing the composition, functions, and responsibilities of each committee to optimize efficiency and effectiveness.
- Evaluation and Performance Metrics: Implementing mechanisms to evaluate the performance of board committees and setting measurable metrics can help assess their effectiveness in achieving their objectives. Regular reviews and assessments can identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement.
- By addressing these areas for improvement, the Board can further enhance its impact and contribute to the overall success and advancement of the university.
- Consolidating Committees when possible.
- Shorter meetings.
- Evaluating program effectiveness.
- Improving safety and security, and cyber security.
- Be more strategic about measuring our student success based on data.
- Be more strategic about the direction of the University and the future.
- Be more involved with the Strategic planning for the next 5 years.

2024-2025 Board of Trustees Self-Assessment

- Better job of self-evaluation. Are we as effective as we should be. Are we spending too much time on details?
- The board must demonstrate a stronger commitment to diversity of thought as well as diversity in staffing, especially in upper leadership.
- I believe the main area where the Board can improve is in the structure and utilization of our Committees. While each committee does meaningful work, I feel we have too many, which spreads our efforts thin and limits opportunities for broader participation and long-term strategic discussions among all Board members.
- We have improved in the area of board committee consolidation to ensure we are as efficient as possible with the time of Board members, President, Cabinet and other staff. When we have the opportunity to bring these groups together continue to ensure we are focused on strategic issues that will drive the campus forward.

I recommend the following goals for board improvement for the coming year:

- Scheduled rotation for participation in key campus activities; reorganization of committee structure.
- Refine committees to the following: (1) Combined Audit/Governance Committee, (2) Learning & Leadership Committee, (3) Student Recruitment, Retention & Engagement Committee, (4) Fundraising & Impact Committee, and (5) Resource Stewardship Committee.
- Ensure that all policies are reviewed and that a cycle of review is adhered to.
- Devote Full Board meeting to strategic discussions rather than a review of previous committee meetings.
- Support the launch of the new strategic plan.
- As part of strategic planning, ensure that all stakeholders have a solid and common understanding of the challenges facing higher education in general and the University in particular.
- Continue to shift focus to more strategic vs. administrative issues.
- Continue to drive toward more dashboard-like reporting of KPIs to get a pulse on the University.
- While we have seen more data being presented, I am not sure that there is a unified understanding of KPI's - what they measure, what they do, why we are asking for them. Data, while helpful, is not always indicative of performance. I think if we were able to provide, perhaps, an educational opportunity for both trustees and university leaders to put us all on the same page. I understand that this, may just be something that I'm needing more information about. If that's not the case and if we all need a session to center us on what we need when we ask for key performance indicators, this could be an improvement area that we could all benefit from.
- Development of a Strategic Plan for the Next 3 Years: Initiating the development of a comprehensive strategic plan that outlines clear objectives, priorities, and strategies for the university's growth and development over the next three years.

2024-2025 Board of Trustees Self-Assessment

This plan should involve input from key stakeholders and align with the university's mission and vision.

- Continued Evaluation of Board Policies and Procedures: Continuing to evaluate and refine board policies and procedures to ensure they remain relevant, effective, and aligned with best practices in governance. This includes reviewing existing policies, identifying areas for improvement, and implementing updates as necessary to enhance transparency, accountability, and decision-making processes.
- Sustained Financial Oversight and Capital Improvements: Continuing to exercise diligent financial oversight and prioritizing capital improvements to support the institution's long-term financial health and sustainability. This involves monitoring budgetary performance, identifying cost-saving opportunities, and strategically investing in capital projects that enhance the academic and physical infrastructure of the university.
- By focusing on these goals, the board can strengthen its governance practices, enhance strategic planning processes, and contribute to the continued success and advancement of the institution.
- A clearer format to evaluate the President and a more uniform measure for the Board.
- Encouraging Board Members to attend Trustee Seminars.
- Demand revamping of course offerings for majors with low numbers of participants and right size the offerings.
- Introduce data driven, offerings in math, science, health care, business, finance, accounting, Forensic and others that are in demand of today and next 20-50 years.
- Better job of fundraising efforts to support the University to grow its reserves and rainy-day funds.
- Strongly support the capital campaign initiative.
- Measure student success and the University success in a meaningful manner.
- Strongly support the cabinet and the president in their efforts to face financial, enrollment and political challenges.
- The Board can fine-tune its meeting structure, as well as the delivery of sub-committee reports.
- Reorganization of the Committees to our strategic objectives.

Additional Comments:

- Work with the administration on a dashboard of key metrics that can be reviewed at each meeting for ease of understanding and comparison.
- I feel honored to be a part of it. Especially in a time when there is so much chaos and anxiety around the future of higher education and where there are efforts to dismantle work that has benefited the University, the state, country and world, it is good to be part of a group that recognizes the importance of the work we are doing.

2024-2025 Board of Trustees Self-Assessment

- This is a great group of people who clearly care about the direction of the University.
- As a new member of the Board, I found the onboarding process very thorough.
- This Board is very active and filled with people that are dedicated to the University and what it stands for. I personally appreciate the efforts, the time spent on meetings, functions and events. This board donates time and resources that are greatly appreciated.

2024-2025 Board of Trustees Self-Assessment

Overall, Trustees “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with a majority of the statements. Any statements in **bold** were found on multiple assessments.

Strongly Agreed Statements:

Board Operations

- **The board understands and adheres to its legal responsibilities.**
- **The board follows a code of ethics or standards of practice.**
- **Board members treat one another with respect, accommodating differences of opinion.**
- **Board members are prepared for board meetings and attend regularly.**
- **Once a decision is made, board members cease debate and uphold the decision of the board.**
- **The board maintains confidentiality of privileged information.**
- **Through its behavior, the board has set a positive example for the president and campus community.**
- The board actively encourages creativity and innovation.
- **The board is willing to take a stand for what it believes is right for students and the community.**
- **The board understands the political implications of its actions.**
- **The board works to build positive relationships with all stakeholders.**
- **New members receive an orientation to the board and the institution.**
- Board members are knowledgeable about the roles and responsibilities of trusteeship.
- The board adequately studies issues prior to board action.
- **The board periodically evaluates itself and strives to become increasingly more effective.**
- **The board self-evaluation process provides useful information on board performance.**

Board-President Relations

- **The board provides a high level of support to the president.**
- **The board maintains open communication with the president.**
- **The board effectively evaluates the president on an annual basis.**
- **The board clearly delegates the administration of the university to the president.**

Advocating for the University

- **The board recognizes positive accomplishments of the university.**
- The board actively supports the university's foundation and fundraising efforts.
- Board members are knowledgeable about state and national educational policy issues.
- The board understands and protects the academic freedom of the

2024-2025 Board of Trustees Self-Assessment

faculty and administrators.

Institutional Performance

- The board monitors and advances the impact the university has on the community.
- The board clearly delegates the administration of the university to the president.
- **The board demonstrates a concern for the success of all students by monitoring broad student learning outcomes.**
- The board monitors and advances the impact the university has on the community.
- **The board monitors performance related to fiscal management.**
- **The board understands the financial audit and its recommendations.**

Standards for University Operations

- **The board understands the budget documents and the fiscal condition of the university.**
- **The board is committed to equal opportunity.**
- The board's policies ensure participation in decision-making through an effective governance model.

Community Relations

- Board members adhere to protocols for responding to community members and the media.
- The board is knowledgeable about community and regional needs and expectations.
- Board members keep the president informed of community contacts.
- **The board, through its diverse composition, fairly represents the community it serves.**

Policy Direction

- **The board focuses on policy and strategy in board discussions, not on administrative matters.**
- **The board ensures a relevant Strategic Plan that is responsive to students and the community.**
- The board is appropriately involved in the planning process.
- The board encourages partnerships and cooperative agreements with business, government, community agencies, and other educational institutions.

Policy Role

2024-2025 Board of Trustees Self-Assessment

- The board periodically reviews and evaluates its policies.
- The board focuses on policy and strategy in board discussions, not on administrative matters
- The board policy manual is current, relevant, and useful.
- **The policy-making process is clear, public and inclusive.**
- The board is aware of the campus governance model and the means through which policy recommendations are vetted through the campus community.
- The board understands that the primary function of the board is to establish the policies by which the university is to be administered.
- Policy recommendations contain adequate information and are presented so that sufficient time is allowed for study and discussion.



BOARD RETREAT

AUGUST 8, 2025



Strategic Plan & KPIs
Board Self-Evaluation and Effectiveness
Board Committee Restructure



How effective are we as a Board?

Time management?

Board Structure and number of committees?

Concentrating on the big picture?

Student experience & success?

BECOMING MORE EFFECTIVE

Should we reduce the number of committees?

Are we concentrating on the meaningful topics?



Our mission is to ensure:

- Student Success
- University Success
- Are we effective?
- Are we asking the right questions?
- Are we looking at the BIG PICTURE?
- Are we too involved in detail?
- How can we get the right information and data?
- Are we getting it?
- How are we dealing with the data?
- What do we expect from the leadership?



BOARD SELF-EVALUATION

DO WE HAVE THE RIGHT LEADERSHIP ON THE BOARD?

Are we transparent?

Are we communicative?

Are we true to the students and the University?

Are we dedicated enough? Participation, donation of time and material?

Do we know what we are doing?

Duty of care? Duty of loyalty?

What do we need to do better?





**SURVEY RESULTS
STRONGLY AGREE**

Board Operations:

- Strong code of ethics and standards of practice
- Well prepared for meetings and strong attendance at regularly scheduled meetings
- Sets a positive example for the President and campus community
- Stands for what it believes is right for students and the community
- Works to build a positive relationship with all stakeholders
- Periodically evaluates itself and strives to become more effective





SURVEY RESULTS STRONGLY AGREE

Board-President Relations:

- Were strongly agreed across the board.

Institutional Performance:

- Feedback was strong across understanding of fiscal management and audits.

Policy Direction:

- Highlighted that there's a strong focus on policy and strategy in Board discussions, not on administrative matters.





- Clearly delegates the administration of the University to the President
- Spends sufficient time discussing the future direction of the University
- Ensures the University regularly evaluates program effectiveness
- The Board is aware of the campus governance model and the means through which policy recommendations are vetted through the campus community

**AREAS OF FOCUS (DISAGREE OR
DON'T KNOW STATEMENT)**





THOUGHTS? POSSIBILITIES?

1) Student Success Committee

- Academic programs and Success
- Student Life and Mental Health
- Arts & Athletics
- Community Engagement
- Internships & Co-ops
- Placement After College
- Equity, Belonging and Diversity
- Safety & Security
- Arts / Music & Athletics



THOUGHTS? POSSIBILITIES?

2) University Success Committee

- Enrollment Management & Recruiting
- Community Engagement and Involvement
- Retention
- DGCE
- Institutional Research & Data Analysis
- Faculty Success & Enrichment
- Alumni Affairs
- Strategic Plan & KPIs



THOUGHTS? POSSIBILITIES?

3) University Finance & Audit Committee

- Audit
- Financial
- Capital Planning & Facilities
- Long Term planning & Finances
- Investments and Reserves Management
- Human resources and Mental Health
- Risk Management
- Institutional Advancement
- Marketing & Branding



THOUGHTS? POSSIBILITIES?

4) Executive Committee

- Governance
- Trustee Pool & Nomination
- Legal
- External Representation & Relations
- Executive Matters
- Strategic Plan and KPI



THOUGHTS? POSSIBILITIES?

Timing & Logistics:

Number of committee members?

Co-Chairs from the Board?

University department head representation or co-representation?

Sub-group reports as needed?

Committee meetings may or may not be on the same day of the Board meeting?

Effective 1/1/2026. To provide ample timing for vetting and review by legal



THANK YOU

Westfield State University
Board of Trustees
Committee Assignments
2025-2026

	Academic Affairs	Audit	Enrollment Management and Student Affairs	Executive (officers of Full Board)	Financial Affairs	Governance and Nomination	Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion	Advancement, Marketing, and External Relations
Chair	Chris Montemayor	Theresa Jasmin	William Reichelt	Ali Salehi	George Gilmer	Melissa Alvarado	Tessa Lucey	Dr. Gloria Williams
Vice Chair	Jason Queenin	William Reichelt	Tessa Lucey	Melissa Alvarado	Jason Queenin	Theresa Jasmin	Michael O'Rourke	Chris Montemayer
Secretary	Barney Garcia	Michael O'Rourke	Jason Queenin	Dr. Gloria Williams	Chris Montemayor	Tessa Lucey	Melissa Alvarado	Barney Garcia
Member	Michael O'Rourke	Melissa Alvarado	Barney Garcia	Theresa Jasmin	Theresa Jasmin	Michael O'Rourke	Dr. Gloria Williams	Michael O'Rourke
Member	George Gilmer	Dr. Gloria Williams	George Gilmer		Barney Garcia	Chris Montemayor	George Gilmer	Jason Queenin
Member	William Reichelt	Tessa Lucey				William Reichelt		
Quorum:	4	4	3	3	3	4	3	3
University Staff	Provost William Salka	VP Stephen Taksar	VP Kevin Hearn	President Thompson	VP Stephen Taksar	Michael Freeman	Provost William Salka	VP Lisa McMahon
Liaisons:								Atty. Melinda Phelps

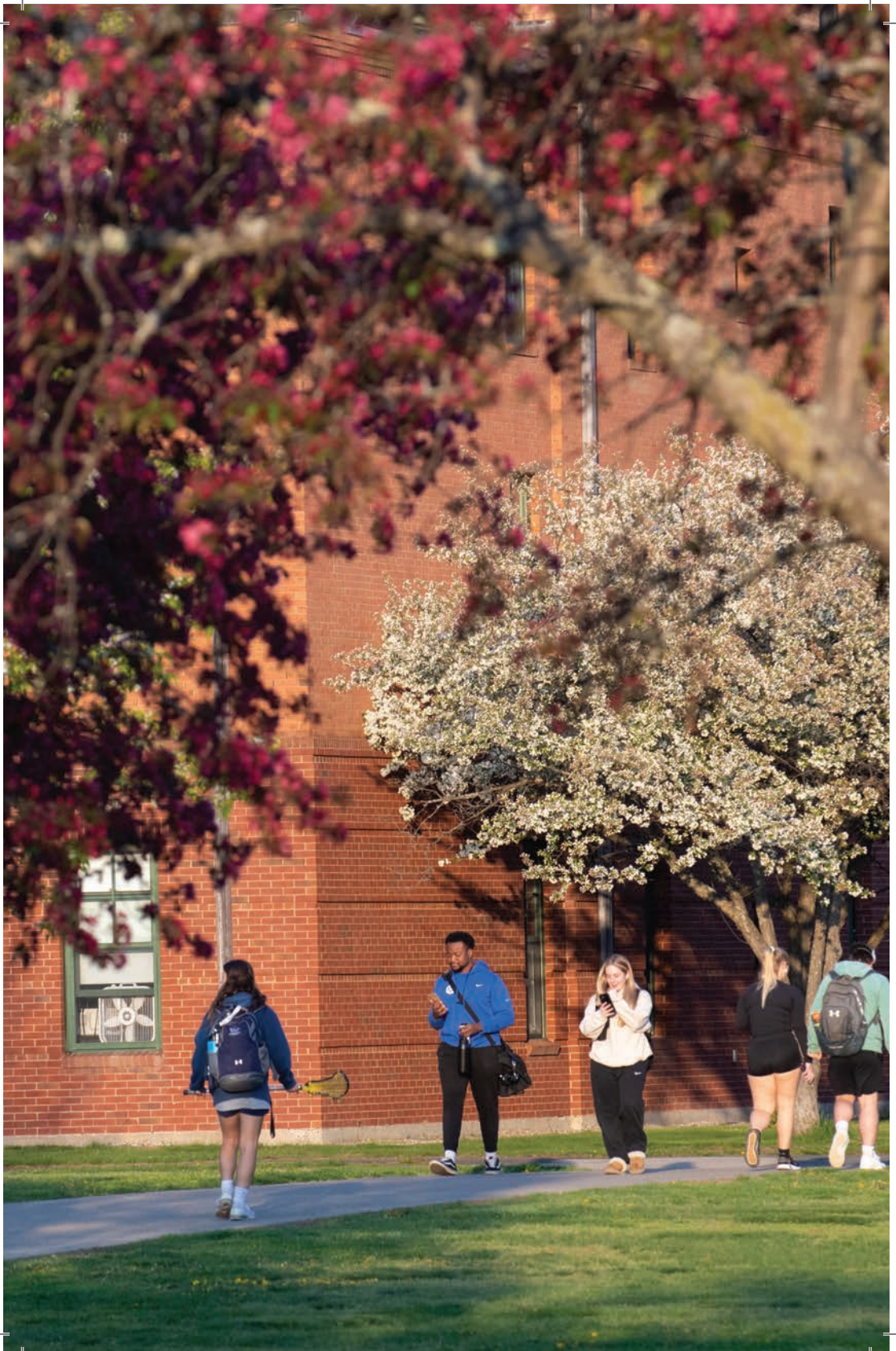
The chair of the Board serves as an ex-officio, voting member of all committees *except the Audit Committee* , but will not count toward establishing a committee's quorum.



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Bylaws

Westfield State University





ARTICLE I.

BOARD AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Section 1. Statutory Duties and Responsibilities. The governance of Westfield State University is vested in the board of trustees. As such, but subject to the provisions of the General Laws and regulations of the Commonwealth, the board may do the following:

- A. Periodically review the University's mission and purposes.
- B. Appoint the president, who shall be the University's chief executive officer, and set appropriate terms of employment, including but not limited to compensation.
- C. Support the president and annually assess his or her performance based on such goals and other criteria as the board and DHE may prescribe from time to time after consultation with the president and to conduct a periodic comprehensive evaluation of the president, consistent with DHE policy
- D. Review and approve the University's table of organization with specific attention to newly created administrative positions such as vice president and dean. The President shall inform the board of all senior-level appointments at the rank of dean and above prior to hire. The board shall determine broad policy guiding the appointment of all faculty members and employees, on the recommendation of the president, and consistent with its other policies and with any applicable collective bargaining agreements. The president shall inform the board of any salary adjustments of non-unit personnel beyond cost-of-living adjustments prior to the granting of those adjustments.
- E. Review and approve proposed changes in the University's academic programs and other major enterprises consistent with the University's mission, plans, and financial resources.
- F. Approve the annual budget and fees, regularly monitor the University's financial condition, establish policy and approve guidelines affecting all institutional assets, including investments and the physical plant.

- G. Adopt bylaws, rules, and regulations for the governance of its members, officers, agents, and employees and require adherence to such rules.
- H. Review and approve changes to the University's major academic programs and services as needed for the successful conduct of its mission and purposes.
- I. Grant diplomas and confer degrees based upon the recommendation of the president and faculty.
- J. Grant honorary degrees.
- K. Approve the naming of University buildings, facilities and spaces according to applicable policies and procedures.
- L. Serve actively as advocates for the University in appropriate matters of public policy and preserve institutional autonomy in consultation with the president and with other responsible parties, as the board shall determine.
- M. Periodically assess its own performance in order to set an example for the University community and to seek ways to strengthen its effectiveness as a corporate body.
- N. Exercise such other authority as from time to time may be conferred upon the board in accordance and compliance with the applicable laws and regulations of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- O. To ensure and promote the University's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in the University's student recruitment, hiring practices, curriculum, and co-curricular offerings.
- P. To act on all recommendations, whether approved or not, of the board's standing and special committees.

Section 2. Trustee Duties and Responsibilities.

Recognizing the significance of serving on the board of trustees of Westfield State University, each trustee is expected to adhere to the following principles:

- A. To remember that no individual board member has legal standing or authority to act on behalf of the board or the University except only as and to the extent authorized by the board. Only the full board as a corporate body is vested with such authority.
- B. To devote time to learn how the University's missions and multiple purposes are met and to understand the University's uniqueness, strengths, and needs.
- C. To become familiar with and committed to, and to abide by, the board's responsibilities and policies, as set forth in these bylaws and in applicable provisions of law, including the provisions of chapter 15A of the General Laws of Massachusetts.
- D. To accept and defend academic freedom and the board's role in the practice of collaborative governance as fundamental characteristics of good University governance. Encourage the engagement of members of the University community in shared governance.
- E. To assist the board in its efforts to balance its responsibilities in serving its broad public trust with advocacy for the University's autonomy and needs to fulfill its mission and purposes.
- F. Encourage its members to contribute financially to the University's fund-raising goals, participate in strategies to secure sources of support, and authorize University officers to accept gifts or bequests subject to board policy and the regulations of the Commonwealth.

ARTICLE II.

OFFICERS OF THE UNIVERSITY

Section 1. President of the University. Subject to governing provisions of law, the president of the University shall be appointed by the board subject to the approval of the BHE and shall serve at the board's pleasure. The president shall be the University's chief executive officer and the chief adviser to and executive agent of the board of trustees and shall, for those purposes, assume such responsibilities and exercise such authorities as the board shall from time to time confer on him or her. The president shall serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the board and of all its committees. The president shall endeavor to attend the meetings of board committees and shall bring any matter before the board or any of its committees as may be required by these bylaws or by any applicable policy or directive of the board or as he or she may deem appropriate. The president shall designate a member of the University's senior administration to serve as a liaison to each board committee.

Section 2. Other Officers. In consultation with the president, the board shall determine the number of vice presidents and the number of such other senior administrative officers necessary to efficiently and effectively manage and administer the University. All such vice presidents and senior administrative officers shall be hired by the president, be under the president's supervision and shall exercise such powers and duties as he or she may prescribe.

ARTICLE III.

OFFICERS OF THE BOARD

Section 1. Election. At its regular meeting held in June of each year, the board shall elect a chair, vice chair and secretary, all of whom shall be voting trustees. The chair, vice chair, and secretary shall have renewable one-year terms, but shall not serve more than three consecutive years.

Section 2. Chair. The chair of the board shall preside at all meetings of the board. He or she shall have the authority to perform the duties usually attached to the office, including establishing the time and place of all meetings and (but subject to the requirements of these bylaws) setting the agenda therefor [for all board meetings] and shall have such other authority and duties as are prescribed by these bylaws and from time to time by the board. The chair shall serve as an ex-officio, voting member of all board committees except the Audit Committee, but will not count toward establishing a committee's quorum. The chair shall count toward establishing a quorum of the full board.

Section 3. Vice Chair. The vice chair of the board shall have the authority to perform the duties of the chair of the board in the event of the chair's absence or incapacity. The vice chair may have such other authority and duties as are prescribed by these bylaws and from time to time by the board.

Section 4. Secretary. The secretary shall ensure that the board of trustees is acting in accordance with these bylaws, that bylaw amendments are promptly made as necessary, that the minutes of board and committee meetings are accurate, entered into the records of the University and promptly distributed to all trustees, that meetings are properly scheduled and noticed, and that board policy statements and other official records are properly maintained. The secretary shall perform such other duties as are prescribed from time to time by the board and may be assisted in all duties by a staff member designated by the president at the request of the secretary.

ARTICLE IV.

MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Section 1. Board Meetings. Meetings of the board of trustees shall be held on the campus or any other place that the board may from time to time designate. All meetings of the board and its standing and special committees or subcommittees shall be noticed and conducted in accordance with the relevant General Laws of Massachusetts, including the state's open meeting law.

Section 2. Regular Meetings. There shall be five regular meetings of the board of trustees each year; one such meeting shall be held in June. Each meeting shall be held at such time, date and place as the board shall prescribe. At such meetings any business relating to the University may be discussed and transacted.

Section 3. Special Meetings. The chair of the board shall have the power to assemble the board at any time in special meetings. He or she shall also assemble the board in such meetings upon the written request of at least four members of the board or the president. At a special meeting, the board shall deal with only the business that was stated in the call for and notice of the meeting.

Section 4. Notice of Meetings. Notice of the time, place, and date (and, in the case of a special meeting, the purpose) of each meeting shall be served either personally, by e-mail or by mail not less than seven (7) nor more than thirty (30) days before the meeting to each member of the board and to the president. If mailed, such notice shall be directed to the trustee at his or her address as it appears in the records of the University unless he or she shall have filed with the secretary a written request that notices be mailed to the address designated in such request; unless he or she requests otherwise, notice shall be directed to the president at the University. A notice of every meeting shall be posted in accordance with the requirements of the state's open meeting law.

Section 5. Quorum. A simple majority of the board as constituted (6) shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of board business. The trustees present

at any meeting, if constituting less than a quorum, may adjourn any meeting until such quorum shall be present, but shall conduct no other business. All questions coming before the board of trustees shall be determined by a majority vote of those trustees voting on that issue. Voting by proxy is not permissible.

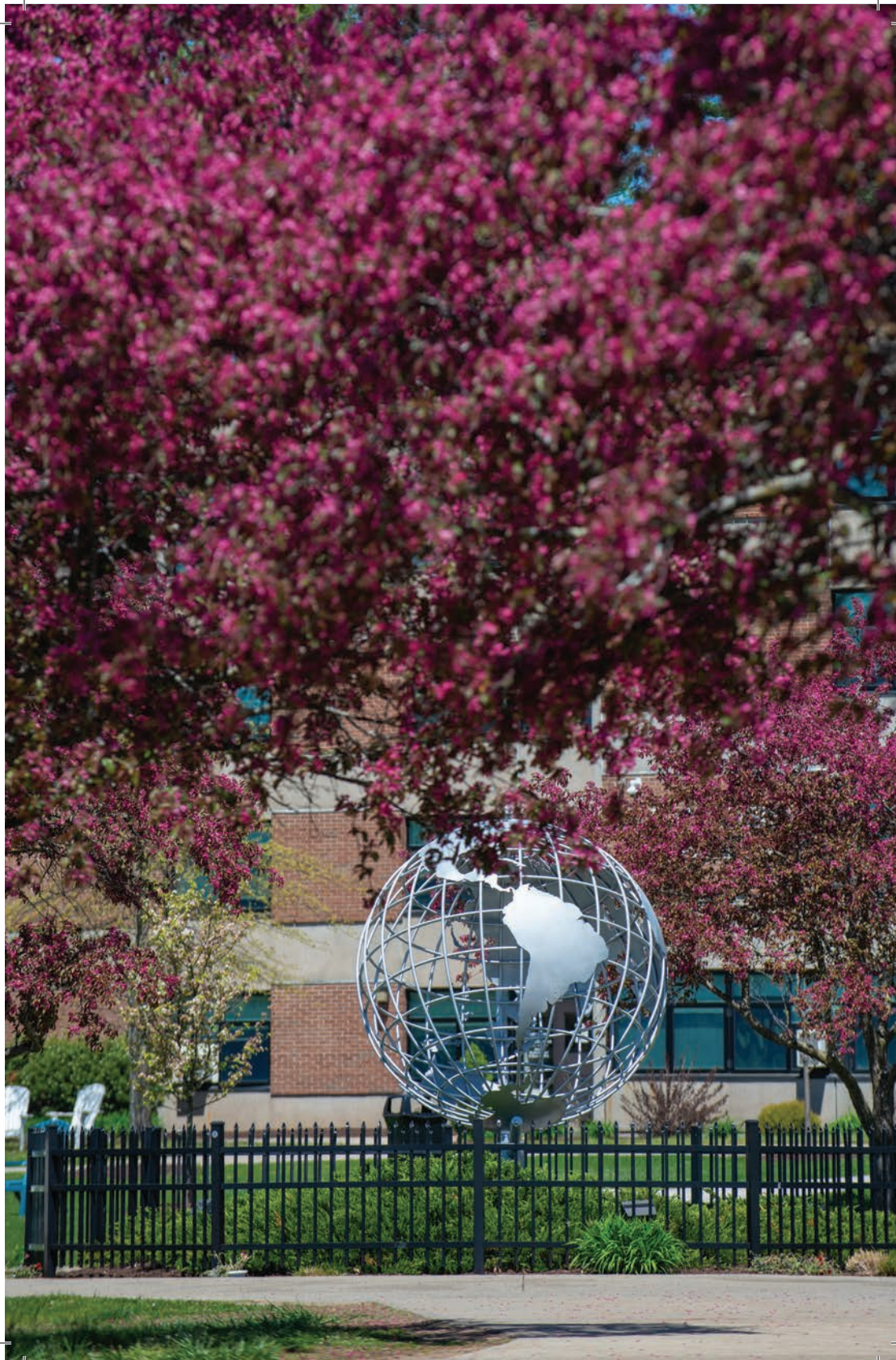
Section 6. Pro Tempore Chairman. If the chair and vice-chair are absent, the trustees present may elect a chair pro tempore to preside at the meeting.

Section 7. Remote Participation. In accordance with 940 CMR 29.10, the board may authorize remote participation in its meetings consistent with current regulation and statute.

Section 8. Executive Sessions. Executive sessions of the board and its committees shall be convened and conducted in conformity with the state's open meeting law. In addition to any person whose attendance may be permitted by law, the board and any of its committees may in any particular case or cases permit persons (including the president) who are not members of the board to attend all or any part of an executive session in order to give information or advice as deemed necessary or appropriate by the board or such committee. The topics and purposes of executive sessions shall be limited to those matters permitted by the state's open-meeting law.

Section 9. Rules of Procedure. Business before the board shall be conducted according to the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order when not inconsistent with these bylaws or with any other rule or order of the board. The board should prescribe protocols governing the petitions of persons wishing to address the board and ensure their availability in a policy separate from these bylaws.

Section 10. Other Participants. The board may, at its sole discretion, invite other individuals to participate in meetings of the board or its committees.





ARTICLE V.

BOARD COMMITTEES

Section 1. Standing Committees. The board shall establish certain standing committees as it wishes. It shall minimally have (1) an Executive Committee, (2) an Academic Affairs Committee, (3) a Financial Affairs Committee, (4) an Audit Committee, (5) a Governance and Nomination Committee, (6) an Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Committee, (7) a Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee, and (8) an Advancement, Marketing, and External Relations Committee. Each standing committee shall have a written description of its responsibilities.

Section 2. Appointment of Committee Members. The chair of the board of trustees, in consultation with the Executive Committee and president, shall appoint annually from among the voting members of the board the members and chairs of all committees, subject to the consent of the board of trustees. Unless the board shall otherwise permit or require, a majority of the voting members of each committee shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business. The chair shall endeavor to insure some degree of carryover in committee memberships from year to year.

Section 3. Notice of Meetings. Notice of each committee meeting shall be given to the members of the committee in such fashion as the committee shall from time to time prescribe and otherwise in accordance with the requirements of Article IV, Section 4, of these bylaws and applicable provisions of law.

Section 4. Executive Committee

A. Membership. The Executive Committee shall consist of the board chair, the most recent past board chair, the board vice chair, and the board secretary. The chair of the board shall chair this committee. The Executive Committee shall convene when called by the chair, by any two members of the committee or, by the president and any single member of the committee. In the event of a permanent or temporary vacancy of the board vice chair, secretary, or past board chair, the chair of the board of trustees, with the consent of the Executive Committee and in consultation with the president, shall appoint a replacement from among the other voting members of the board to fill that position until a replacement is elected to office or becomes available.

B. Responsibilities

- 1) See Executive Committee Charter for a more detailed listing of responsibilities. The Executive Committee shall exercise in emergencies all the authority of the board of trustees consistent with the policies of the board or with any action taken earlier by the board. The committee shall not preempt the board except in those emergency circumstances that do not permit the handling of a matter in the normally prescribed manner by the board and shall be required to secure the board's ratification of any actions taken at the board's next meeting. The Executive Committee shall have the authority to determine, in its sole discretion, whether an emergency exists for the purposes of this paragraph, and in any such case shall make a record of its decision and the reasons. In the event of an emergency the Executive Committee may waive the meeting notice requirements of Article IV.
- 2) Unless the board shall otherwise direct, the Executive Committee shall act on behalf of the board and shall exercise all of its authorities during the period commencing upon the conclusion of the board's meeting in June of each year and ending upon the convening of the board's next regular meeting. The committee shall be required to secure at such meeting the board's ratification of any actions taken during such period.
- 3) A decision of the board to decline to ratify any act done by the Executive Committee under the authorities conferred on it by the preceding paragraphs shall have only prospective effect and shall not operate to impair or limit the effect of such act as and when taken and shall not operate to impair or limit the efficacy or effect of anything done or not done pursuant to or in reliance on such act prior to the date on which the board declines to ratify it.
- 4) The Executive Committee also shall have the responsibility to oversee the president's annual performance evaluation in accordance with the board's standing policies and procedures.
- 5) The Executive Committee shall provide general oversight of progress toward planning goals and other matters related to University long-range and facilities planning and otherwise advise the president and board chair.

Section 5. Academic Affairs Committee

- A. Membership.** The Academic Affairs Committee shall consist of at least three voting trustees.
- B. Responsibilities.** See Academic Affairs Committee Charter for a more detailed listing of responsibilities. The Academic Affairs Committee shall consider and recommend to the board policies and actions regarding the academic affairs of the University, including admission policies, new curricula (graduate and undergraduate), student records and research; and shall advise the president on matters relating to Academic Affairs of the University.

Section 6. Financial Affairs Committee

- A. Membership.** The Financial Affairs Committee shall consist of at least three voting trustees (excluding the chair).
- B. Responsibilities.** See Financial Affairs Committee Charter for a more detailed listing of responsibilities. The Financial Affairs Committee shall consider and recommend to the board policies and actions regarding the formulation of the University's all funds budget, including but not limited to, operating and capital budgets and the establishment of student fees. The committee oversees the development and review of long-range financial and facility plans as well as the University's capital budget and deferred maintenance. The committee shall also consider and recommend to the board policies and actions regarding capital planning, investments, development, and security of the campus.

Section 7. Audit Committee

- A. Membership.** The Audit Committee shall consist of at least three voting trustees; provided however, that no more than one committee member may also be a member of the Financial Affairs Committee.
- B. Responsibilities.** See Audit Committee Charter for a more detailed listing of responsibilities. The committee shall oversee the University's financial practices and standards of fiscal conduct. The committee shall oversee all external financial audits, ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, and monitor internal controls and risk management systems. The committee shall have free and open communication

among all segments of the University community and the authority to ask any employee of the University to appear before it within the mandate of the committee, as well as the authority to engage independent counsel and any other professional advisors as may be necessary to carry out its duties, providing the board has approved the expenditure of funds for such engagements.

Section 8. Governance and Nomination Committee

A. Membership. The Governance and Nomination Committee shall consist of at least three voting trustees.

B. Responsibilities. See Governance and Nomination Committee Charter for a more detailed listing of responsibilities. The committee shall work with the board chair and the president to help the board function effectively, efficiently, and with integrity. Its responsibilities shall minimally include nominating annually the board chair, vice chair, and secretary; working with the board chair and president to nominate potential new trustees to the Governor according to procedures separate from these bylaws; ensuring that a substantive orientation process is in place for all new board members; overseeing, or determining with the board chair and president, the timing and process of periodic board self-assessment; encouraging board members to participate periodically in in-service education opportunities; and ensuring that the board adheres to its rules of conduct, including conflict-of-interest and disclosure policies, and that it otherwise maintains the highest levels of integrity in everything it does. It shall also periodically review the adequacy of the board's bylaws. This committee shall first consider all recommendations for amendment of these bylaws.

Section 9. Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Committee

A. Membership. The Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Committee shall consist of at least three voting trustees.

B. Responsibilities. See Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Committee Charter for a more detailed listing of responsibilities. With regard to enrollment and retention management, the committee shall provide oversight to enrollment management strategies and plans, and monitor key metrics to help track progress

toward the stated goals. With regard to student affairs, the committee shall consider and recommend to the board policies and actions regarding the student affairs of the University, including student life, intramural and varsity athletics, health services, housing, student activities, and student government.

Section 10. Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee

- A. Membership.** The Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee shall consist of at least three voting trustees.
- B. Responsibilities.** See the Justice, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee Charter for a more detailed listing of responsibilities. The committee shall provide oversight, advice, and monitor the University's development of policies and procedures, initiatives, and practices designed to enhance the quality of campus climate and provide for inclusive learning.

Section 11. Advancement, Marketing, and External Relations Committee

- A. Membership.** The Advancement, Marketing, and External Relations Committee shall consist of at least three voting trustees.
- B. Responsibilities.** See the Advancement, Marketing, and External Relations Committee Charter for a more detailed listing of responsibilities. The committee shall provide oversight of University advancement and facilitate board and board member participation in advancement. Committee responsibilities shall minimally include overseeing policies and procedures related to University advancement plans, goals and projects, monitoring progress toward meeting those goals, and advising the president on matters related to University advancement; considering and recommending fundraising policies and procedures; establishing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Westfield State University Foundation, Inc.; establishing goals for board member participation in charitable giving; and participating in identifying, cultivating, and approaching major donors. In addition, the committee will provide advice to marketing and communication, to include University branding, value proposition, and outreach efforts.

ARTICLE VI.

INDEMNIFICATION

The board recognizes and acknowledges that the Commonwealth has undertaken to indemnify its members in the manner and to the extent set forth in chapter 15A, §22, of the General Laws, and that the Commonwealth has undertaken to indemnify the officers and employees of the University to the extent provided in General Law chapter 258, section 9. The board may secure a policy of directors' and officers' liability insurance in a manner consistent with law and in the best interests of the University.

ARTICLE VII.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ANNUAL DISCLOSURE

All members of the board are state employees within the meaning of the state's ethics statute (chapter 268A of the General Laws). Violations of the statute may give rise to both civil and criminal penalties. Each member of the board is therefore expected to be familiar with the requirements of the ethics statute and to comply with them.

All trustees are advised to disclose to the board any actual or potential conflict of interest at the earliest practicable time and to take such other action in that regard as the law may require. Further, each trustee is advised to absent himself or herself from discussions of and to abstain from voting on any matters under consideration by the board of trustees or its committees if to do otherwise would constitute an actual or potential conflict of interest. The minutes of such meeting shall, as appropriate, reflect that a disclosure was made and that the trustee having an actual or potential conflict of interest absented himself or herself from discussions of and abstained from voting on the affected matter.

ARTICLE VIII.

BOARD MEMBERSHIP AND TRUSTEE TERMS

The board is composed of 11 members who are appointed by the governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts including an elected student trustee and elected alumni trustee. With the exception of the student trustee, each member is appointed for a five-year term, with the possibility of one additional term of five years including the elected alumni trustee. Each member of the board is required to take an oath to discharge faithfully, impartially, honestly, and to the best of his or her abilities the duties of a trustee.

The term of office for the elected student member shall be for one year. The student member shall be eligible for reelection for as long as that student remains an eligible undergraduate student in good standing. If at any time during the elected term of office the student trustee ceases to maintain the number of credit hours or grade point average determined for eligibility or fails to maintain satisfactory academic progress, that membership on the board shall be terminated and the office of the elected student member will be deemed vacant. A vacancy in the office of the elected student member prior to the expiration of a term shall be filled for the remainder of the term in the same manner as student elections to full terms.

The members of the board recognize and acknowledge that, by taking up their appointments as such, they have assumed an obligation, fiduciary in its nature, to conduct themselves, to exercise their authorities and to discharge their responsibilities for the benefit of the University and of those whom it serves and not for any other purpose. They also therefore recognize and acknowledge that it is both necessary and appropriate for all members of the board to be regular in their attendance at meetings of the board and at meetings of the committees on which they serve. Trustees have a responsibility to assume an equitable share of the responsibilities that fall to members of the board individually, to inform themselves concerning the University's mission and purpose and to commit themselves to promoting the University's success in its efforts to provide an excellent and accessible education to its students. Because the board's effectiveness as the governing body of the University

depends on the commitment its members make to these principles, the board as a whole recognizes and acknowledges that it is itself responsible both for monitoring the manner and extent to which its members adhere to them and for bringing its concerns to the attention of any member whenever it judges him or her to have failed to have adhered to them fully or appropriately.

ARTICLE IX.

AMENDMENTS

At any meeting of the board that has been duly called, noticed, and convened, these bylaws may be amended or repealed in whole or in part by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the board then in office. A draft of the proposed amendment shall be given to each member at least five days before a regular or special board meeting at which such vote is to be taken.

ADOPTED MARCH 25, 1981

AMENDED NOVEMBER 8, 1983

AMENDED JUNE 3, 1986

AMENDED SEPTEMBER 2, 1986

AMENDED MAY 7, 1990

AMENDED FEBRUARY 3, ADVA1997

AMENDED DECEMBER 3, 1998

AMENDED DECEMBER 7, 2000

AMENDED JUNE 12, 2002

AMENDED APRIL 13, 2006

AMENDED OCTOBER 6, 2008

AMENDED FEBRUARY 9, 2012

AMENDED JUNE 26, 2014

AMENDED OCTOBER 8, 2014

AMENDED JUNE 25, 2015

AMENDED FEBRUARY 15, 2018

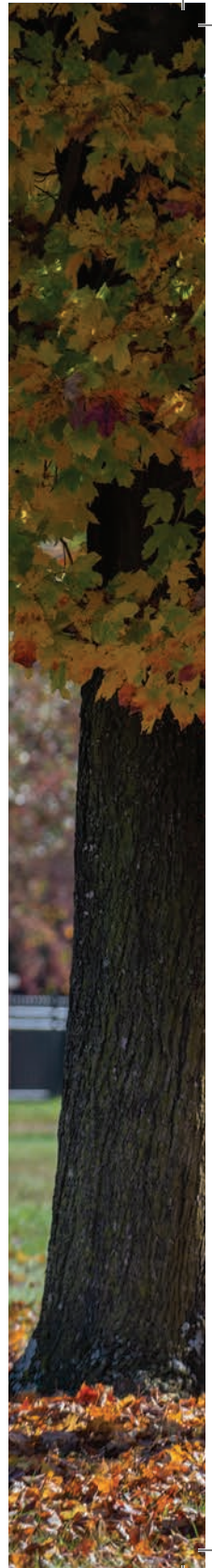
AMENDED DECEMBER 17, 2020

AMENDED OCTOBER 12, 2022

AMENDED DECEMBER 1, 2022

AMENDED FEBRUARY 7, 2023

AMENDED JULY 21, 2023









BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE CHARTER

I. Mission

The Academic Affairs Committee shall consider and make recommendations to the President of the University and the Board of Trustees on a broad range of policies and practices to ensure and promote the quality, integrity, and responsiveness of academic programs, consistent with the mission and vision of the University. The Committee shall act with transparency, provide advice, support, advocacy, and consent in all matters affecting academic programs and appropriate policies, including but not limited to academic programs, faculty matters, assessment, and strategic planning.

II. Authority and Responsibilities

Description

The Committee is entrusted with providing leadership and oversight and where appropriate making recommendations to the President and the Board in the following areas:

- Admission Standards/Requirements
- Retention Standards, Policies, and Practices and Programs to Support Student Achievement/Success
- Curriculum, including proposals for new programs and program modifications and the university's general education program
- Teaching/Learning/Evaluation Process, including faculty appointment, reappointment, promotion, and tenure, and emeritus/a status.
- Maintenance and improvement of educational quality, including assessment of student learning, program review and accreditation, institutional accreditation
- Promotion of the teaching, research, and service functions of the University, consistent with mission and vision
- Policies, practices, and regulations that affect the quality of student life and promote a supportive, inclusive, and diverse environment consistent with intellectual inquiry.

Oversight of Implementation

In carrying out its functions and specific responsibilities, the Academic Affairs Committee shall exercise its role in accordance with applicable Board of Higher Education policies and regulations, existing collective bargaining agreements with faculty, administrative and support units, and consistent with the institution's model of shared governance.

Evaluate Performance

Review and provide updates on overall institution academic performance to include but not limited to persistence, retention, and graduation rates.

Educate the Board

The Committee shall educate and inform the Board on Academic Affairs matters, update the Board on trends and changes in the higher education landscape and the Institution's response to such trends and changes. The Committee shall execute other such duties as delegated by the Board.

III. Organization

Review of Charter

This charter shall be reviewed and reassessed by the Academic Affairs Committee annually, and any proposed changes shall be submitted to the Board for approval.

Membership/Structure/Quorum

The Academic Affairs committee shall consist of at least three Board members. The Committee Chair shall be appointed by the Board Chair. If possible, it is preferable that at least one committee member have higher education academic expertise.

Staff Liaison

The President shall designate a member of the University's senior administration to serve as a liaison to the committee.

Meetings

The Academic Affairs Committee shall meet in advance of each Board of Trustees meeting unless the Committee Chair and Board Chair determine that a meeting is not necessary. A quorum of any meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee shall consist of a majority of its voting members. Committee members may participate by teleconference as permitted by state laws. All meetings will conform to Massachusetts Open Meeting Laws.

Agenda, Minutes and Reports

The Chair, in collaboration with the staff liaison, shall be responsible for establishing the agendas for meetings. An agenda, together with relevant materials, shall be provided to Committee members at least five days in advance of the meeting. Minutes for all meetings shall be drafted by the staff liaison or designee, reviewed by the Committee Chair and staff liaison, and approved by Committee members at the following meeting. Meeting materials will be posted on the University's website within 14 days after each Committee meeting.



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
AUDIT COMMITTEE
CHARTER**

I. Mission

The primary function of the Audit Committee of Westfield State University (the "University") is to oversee the accounting and financial reporting processes of the University, audits of the University's financial statements, reports and records, and risk management systems in a transparent manner. In addition, the Audit Committee must provide assistance to the University's Board of Trustees (the "Board") in fulfilling its responsibilities to the University's students, parents, faculty, donors and staff as to the University's accounting, auditing and reporting practices and controls. In so doing, it is the responsibility of the Audit Committee to maintain free and open means of communication among the Board, independent auditors, internal auditors and members of the senior administration of the University.

II. Authority and Responsibilities

The primary duties and responsibilities of the Audit Committee are to oversee and monitor the University's financial reporting process, internal controls and risk management systems and review and evaluate the performance of the University's independent auditors. The Audit Committee will also evaluate the performance of the University's internal auditing staff as it directly relates to internal audit functions. In fulfilling these duties and responsibilities, the Audit Committee shall take the following actions, in addition to performing such functions as may be assigned by law or regulation, or the Board:

Independent External Audits

1. The Audit Committee shall be directly responsible for the appointment, compensation, retention and oversight of the work of any independent auditor engaged (including resolution of disagreements between administration and the auditor regarding financial reporting) for the purpose of preparing or issuing an audit report or performing other audit, review or attest services for the University. The independent auditor must report directly to the Audit Committee.
2. The Audit Committee shall act as a liaison with University administration and staff and the independent external auditor to develop an annual audit plan and schedule.

3. The Audit Committee, in its capacity as a committee of the Board, shall determine, and the University shall provide, providing the Board has approved the expenditure of funds for such engagements, funding for payment of: (i) compensation to any registered public accounting firm engaged for the purpose of preparing or issuing an audit report or performing other audit, review or attest services for the University; (ii) compensation to any advisers, including, without limitation, an independent financial expert, employed by the Audit Committee, and as permitted by this Charter; and (iii) ordinary and reasonable administrative expenses of the Audit Committee that are necessary or appropriate in carrying out its duties.
4. As part of the audit process, the Audit Committee shall meet with the independent auditors to discuss and determine the scope of the audit. The Audit Committee shall determine that the independent audit team engaged to perform the external audit consists of competent, experienced, auditing professionals.
5. The Audit Committee shall require the independent auditors to submit, on an annual basis, a formal written statement setting forth all relationships between the independent auditors and the University that may affect the objectivity and independence of the independent auditors, consistent with Independence Standards Board Standard No. 1, and the Audit Committee shall actively engage in a dialogue with the independent auditors with respect to any disclosed relationships or services that may impact the objectivity and independence of the independent auditors. The Audit Committee shall take, or recommend that the full Board take, appropriate action to ensure the independence of the independent auditors.
6. The Audit Committee shall require the independent auditors to advise the University of any fact or circumstance that might adversely affect the outside auditors' independence or judgment with respect to the University under applicable auditing standards, including any significant changes to the University's accounting principles and any items required to be communicated by the independent auditor under prevailing audit standards.
7. The Audit Committee shall require the independent auditors to advise the University if it becomes aware that any officer or employee of the University, or its direct or indirect subsidiaries or affiliates, is related to a partner, employee or other representative of the independent auditors, to the extent that such relationship might adversely affect the University under applicable auditing standards.
8. Upon the completion of the annual audit, the Audit Committee shall review the audit findings, including any comments or recommendations of the independent auditors, with the entire Board and obtain the approval of such report from the Board. The Audit Committee shall report to the Board on any issues which may be unresolved.

Internal Audit

1. The Audit Committee shall review the internal audit function of the University, including the independence and authority of its reporting obligations, the proposed audit plans for the coming year and the coordination of such plans with the independent auditors.
2. The Audit Committee shall determine, with consultation from the University's leadership, whether the internal audit function may be performed by a staff internal auditor or may be outsourced to a third party, as deemed appropriate.
3. The Audit Committee shall recommend, with consultation from the University's leadership, the appointment, replacement, reassignment or dismissal of the University's internal auditor as may be warranted.
4. The Audit Committee shall meet at least annually with the University's internal auditor to assure itself that the University has a strong internal auditing function by reviewing the internal audit program and assessing (grading) risk areas along with a proper control environment that promotes accuracy and efficiency in the University's operations.
5. The Audit Committee shall receive reports from the University's internal auditor, which include a summary of findings from completed internal audits and a progress report on the internal audit plan, together with explanations for any deviations from the original plan.
6. The Audit Committee shall consider and review with the University's administration and the internal auditor: (a) significant findings during the year and management's responses thereto, including the status of previous audit recommendations, (b) any difficulties encountered in the course of their audits, including any restrictions on the scope of activities or access to required information, (c) any changes required in the planned scope of the internal audit plan; and (d) the internal auditing department budget and staffing.

Other Responsibilities

1. The Audit Committee shall oversee the University's administration of the University's conflict of interest policy.
2. The Audit Committee shall establish procedures for the confidential, anonymous submission by University staff and administration of concerns regarding questionable accounting or auditing matters.
3. The Audit Committee shall review the regulations and current audit trends and requirements and recommend appropriate policy and practice applications to University administration.

4. The Audit Committee shall investigate or consider such other matters within the scope of its responsibilities and duties as the Audit Committee may, in its discretion, determine to be advisable. The Audit Committee shall have the authority to engage independent counsel and other advisers or experts, as it deems necessary to carry out its duties.
5. The Audit Committee shall prepare any report required by any governmental body or to the public, if any, as required by laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and any/all regulations promulgated thereunder.
6. The Audit Committee shall at all times cooperate with all state auditors and provide any/all reports, statements, minutes and other related documents as may be required by such auditors.

III. Organization

Review of Charter

This charter shall be reviewed and reassessed by the Audit Committee annually, prior to June 30th.

Membership/Structure/Quorum

Per Westfield State University Board of Trustee By-laws, Section 7.A., the Audit Committee shall consist of at least three voting trustees; provided however, that no more than one committee member may also be a member of the Financial Affairs and Advancement Committee. The Audit Committee chairperson shall be appointed by the Board chairperson.

Staff Liaison

The president shall designate a member of the University's senior administration to serve as a liaison to the Audit Committee.

Meetings

The Audit Committee shall, at a minimum, meet in advance of each Board of Trustees meeting, unless the committee chairperson and Board chairperson determine that a meeting is not necessary. A quorum of any meeting of the Audit Committee shall consist of a majority of its voting members. Committee members may participate by teleconference as permitted by state laws. All meetings will conform to Massachusetts open meeting laws. Meeting materials will be posted on the University's website within 14 days after each committee meeting.

Agenda, Minutes and Reports

The chair, in collaboration with the staff liaison, shall be responsible for establishing the agenda for each meeting. An agenda, together with relevant materials, shall be

provided to committee members at least five days in advance of the meeting. Minutes for all meetings shall be drafted by the assistant to the Board of Trustees, reviewed by the committee chair, and approved by committee members at the following meeting.



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT AND STUDENT AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE CHARTER**

I. Mission

The Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Committee will consider and make recommendations to the President and Board of Trustees on all aspects of the life cycle of a student. From student enrollment strategies and plans, which include recruitment, admissions, and financial aid to a student's experiences on campus from orientation to graduation. This committee will have oversight of creating an integrative, transparent, and inclusive learning environment. Matters of general student welfare, including residential life, well-being, safety, co-curricular and student governing policies will be a focus of this group. This committee provides an opportunity for direct communication between students and members of the University's Board of Trustees.

II. Authority and Responsibilities

Policies:

Approve new policies and changes in policy regarding student financial aid, student life, student conduct code and other policies that affect the student life cycle.

Oversight of Implementation:

- Assure there is a current strategic enrollment plan for the University, based on academic offerings, forecasts and market trends.
- Ensure annual plans are in place for recruitment of students and the appropriate awarding of institutional financial aid.
- Focus on long-range, strategic concerns and forecasts relating to changing student demographics and needs in areas relevant to student life on campus.
- Monitor and review reports on current student needs and achievement gaps as they relate to retention of current students.
- Assist in university co-curricular strategies to support and enhance the range of services that complement and enhance the student experience consistent with

the University mission and strategies that support the out-of-classroom student experiences.

- Ensure a range of support services are available and reflective of the range of students that comprise the University community.
- Review policies and procedures affecting the student experience including programs, resources, and co-curricular experiences.
- Review and support services provided to current students and alumni for career support and search and collaborate with the Career Center to help connect our regional partners to the Center.

Evaluate Performance

The committee should be updated at least three times per year on the current enrollment numbers for all segments of the student recruitment plan and approve annually the financial aid awarding strategy.

Educate the Board

To understand the market conditions, opportunities and best practices for the recruitment of new students and the retention of matriculated students. To understand the range of services available to support student success outside of the classroom and challenges students may experience in the student life cycle.

III. Organization

Review of Charter

This charter shall be reviewed and reassessed by the Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Committee at least annually, and any proposed changes shall be submitted to the board for approval.

Membership/Structure/Quorum

The Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Committee shall consist of at least three voting trustees, one of which is a student trustee. The committee chair shall be appointed by the board chair.

Staff Liaison

The president shall designate a member of the University's senior administration to serve as a liaison to the committee.

Meetings

The Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Committee shall meet in advance of each Board of Trustees meeting unless the committee chair and Board chair determine that a meeting is not necessary. A quorum of any meeting of the Enrollment Management and Student Affairs committee shall consist of a majority of its voting members. Committee members may participate by teleconference as permitted by state laws. All meetings will conform to Massachusetts open meeting laws.

Agenda, Minutes and Reports

The chair, in collaboration with the staff liaison, shall be responsible for establishing the agendas for meetings. An agenda, together with relevant materials, shall be provided to committee members at least five days in advance of the meeting. Minutes for all meetings shall be drafted by the staff liaison or designee, reviewed by the committee chair, and approved by committee members at the following meeting. Meeting materials will be posted on the University's website within 14 days after each committee meeting.



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
CHARTER**

I. Mission

Add "transparency" to the mission as requested during charter revisions June 2023.

From Draft Charter drafted by Trustee Johnson on 8/29/17, which was not discussed by or adopted by committee: The purpose of the Executive Committee shall oversee the activities and performance of the standing committees of the Board of Trustees to ensure that Westfield State University's mission is fulfilled and advanced on an ongoing basis. It shall provide a mechanism to regularly communicate with and discuss the performance of standing Board or ad hoc Board Committees. It shall ensure appropriate involvement of non-Board members to committees other than the Executive Committee.

The Committee shall oversee the development and implementation of Westfield State University's strategic plans, engage, leverage, and expand the strength of the Board, and continually maintain and strengthen communications with the University's senior leadership team.

The Executive Committee shall oversee Westfield State University's personnel and human resource functions, reporting its relevant actions to the full Board at its first meeting each year. Specifically, the Committee shall:

1. make recommendations to the full Board in selecting the President of the University;
2. evaluate and decide the terms of employment and compensation of the President of the University;
3. act upon the recommendations of the University President with regard to compensation for the University's senior management team (his/her direct reports);
4. ensure the adequacy of human resources and relevant policies; and
5. review human resource-related regulatory compliance (e.g., privacy, healthcare information).

The Executive Committee shall not supplant the responsibilities of the full Board; rather, the Committee shall work to align strategic plans with the effective operation of the Board and its Committees. With the exception of compensation matters (nos. 2 and 3 above), where the Executive Committee has the full authority of the Board to act on its

behalf, the Executive Committee shall ensure that standing and ad hoc Committees report to the full Board on each Committees' decisions and recommendations.

II. Authority and Responsibilities (choose language for this section from bylaws & other state university language below)

Policies

Oversight of Implementation

Evaluate Performance

Educate the Board

The following paragraphs come directly from the bylaws (7/21/23 version) and should not be used verbatim as part of the committee charter:

A. Responsibilities.

- 1) *See Executive Committee Charter for a more detailed listing of responsibilities. The Executive Committee shall exercise in emergencies all the authority of the board of trustees consistent with the policies of the board or with any action taken earlier by the board. The committee shall not preempt the board except in those emergency circumstances that do not permit the handling of a matter in the normally prescribed manner by the board and shall be required to secure the board's ratification of any actions taken at the board's next meeting. The Executive Committee shall have the authority to determine, in its sole discretion, whether an emergency exists for the purposes of this paragraph, and in any such case shall make a record of its decision and the reasons. In the event of an emergency the Executive Committee may waive the meeting notice requirements of Article IV.*
- 2) *Unless the board shall otherwise direct, the Executive Committee shall act on behalf of the board and shall exercise all of its authorities during the period commencing upon the conclusion of the board's meeting in June of each year and ending upon the convening of the board's next regular meeting. The committee shall be required to secure at such meeting the board's ratification of any actions taken during such period.*
- 3) *A decision of the board to decline to ratify any act done by the Executive Committee under the authorities conferred on it by the preceding paragraphs shall have only prospective effect and shall not operate to impair or limit the effect of such act as and when taken and shall not operate to impair or limit the efficacy or effect of anything done or not done pursuant to or in reliance on such act prior to the date on which the board declines to ratify it.*
- 4) *The Executive Committee also shall have the responsibility to oversee the president's annual performance evaluation in accordance with the board's standing policies and procedures.*

- 5) *The Executive Committee shall provide general oversight of progress toward planning goals and other matters related to University long-range and facilities planning and otherwise advise the president and board chair.*

Suggested language for charter added during Bylaw Review February 2023:

- 1) Bridgewater Article 3, sect 6, #'s 4, 9, 10, 11 & 14 (see below for additional Executive Committee responsibilities) This line can be removed after review.
- 2) To review and make recommendation to the Board of Trustees, as necessary, recommendations of the President regarding the names of buildings, streets, ways and other properties relating to the campus.
- 3) To review and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees, as necessary, the creation and/or name change of any academic college of the University.
- 4) To review and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees, as necessary, any merit salary adjustments in the excess of ten (10) percent proposed for excluded administrators by the President of the University.
- 5) To review and discuss, as necessary, legislative and public policy interests of the Board of Trustees of the University.
- 6) To be informed, on an annual basis, of all merit salary adjustments made for excluded administrators by the President of the University.

B.

- 1) Framingham Article 3, sect 3 #C pg. 5 (see below for additional Executive Committee responsibilities) This line can be removed after review.
To recommend honorary degree candidates for approval by the Board of Trustees.
- 2) Worcester Article 4, Sect 6 D, pg. 6 (see below for additional Executive Committee responsibilities) This line can be removed after review.
To assign to an Officer of the University any matter for which a hearing by the Board of Trustees or any committee thereof is deemed necessary by the Executive Committee, or is required under the laws of the Commonwealth or rules and regulations for said Board.
- 3) Salem Article 3, Sect 6, K pg. 8 (see below for additional Executive Committee responsibilities) This line can be removed after review.
To review litigation matters involving the University.

III. Organization

Review of Charter

This charter shall be reviewed and reassessed by the Executive Committee at least annually, and any proposed changes shall be submitted to the Board for approval. (from template language)

Membership/Structure/Quorum

The Executive Committee shall consist of the board chair, the most recent past board chair, the board vice chair, and the board secretary. The chair of the board shall chair this committee. In the event of a permanent or temporary vacancy of the board vice chair, secretary, or past board chair, the chair of the board of trustees, with the consent of the Executive Committee and in consultation with the president, shall appoint a replacement from among the other voting members of the board to fill that position until a replacement is elected to office or becomes available. (FROM 7/21/23 version of Bylaws)

Staff Liaison

The President shall designate a member of the University's senior administration to serve as liaison to the Executive Committee. (Note-the president is the liaison to this committee)

Meetings

The Executive Committee shall convene when called by the chair, by any two members of the committee or, by the president and any single member of the committee. (from 7/21/23 bylaws)

A quorum of any meeting of the Executive Committee shall consist of a majority of its voting members. Committee members may participate by teleconference as permitted by state laws. All meetings will conform to Massachusetts open meeting laws. (from template language)

Agenda, Minutes and Reports

The committee chair, in collaboration with the staff liaison, shall be responsible for establishing the agendas for meetings. An agenda, together with relevant materials, shall be provided to committee members at least 5 days in advance of the meeting. Minutes for all meetings shall be drafted by the staff liaison or designee, reviewed by the committee chair, and approved by committee members at the following meeting. Meeting materials will be posted on the University's website within 14 days after each committee meeting. (from template language)



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATION COMMITTEE
CHARTER**

I. Mission

The purpose of the Governance and Nomination Committee is to work with the Board chair, president of the University and Board members to help the Board function effectively, efficiently, and with transparency, maintaining the highest levels of integrity in all matters pertaining to Westfield State University.

II. Authority and Responsibilities

Policies

Establish, review, and update the governance policies for approval by the Board including Board bylaws and committee charters. Responsible for overseeing required trustee trainings, as well as new trustee onboarding.

Oversight of Implementation

The Governance and Nomination Chair shall oversee all responsibilities of this committee and may delegate to the Vice Chair, if necessary, any matters that pertain to this committee. Its responsibilities shall minimally include:

Nominating annually the Board chair, vice chair, and secretary;

Working with the Board chair and president to nominate potential new trustees to the Governor according to procedures separate from this charter;

Ensuring that a substantive orientation process is in place for all new Board members;

Coordinating, or determining with the Board chair and president, the timing and process of periodic Board self-assessment;

Encouraging Board members to participate periodically in in-service education opportunities; and

Ensuring that the Board adheres to its rules of conduct, including conflict-of-interest and disclosure policies, It shall also periodically review the adequacy of the Board's bylaws.

Evaluate Performance

Review overall Board performance (both internally amongst trustees and externally across the campus constituencies) at least annually to identify strengths and areas of opportunity that can be improved upon.

Educate the Board

Understand the required training provided by the DHE and ensure trustee completion. Focus on onboarding new trustee education and providing refresher training on specific topics when necessary.

III. Organization

Review of Charter

This charter shall be reviewed and reassessed by the Governance and Nomination Committee at least annually, and any proposed changes shall be submitted to the Board for approval.

Membership/Structure/Quorum

The Governance and Nomination Committee shall consist of at least three voting trustees. Committee membership shall not exceed the maximum term(s) as identified in the current bylaws. The committee chair shall be appointed by the Board chair.

Staff Liaison

The President shall designate a member of the University's senior administration to serve as liaison to the Governance and Nomination Committee.

Meetings

The Governance and Nomination Committee shall meet in advance of each Board of Trustees meeting unless the committee chair and Board chair determine that a meeting is not necessary. A quorum of any meeting of the Governance and Nomination Committee shall consist of a majority of its voting members. Committee members may participate by teleconference as permitted by state laws. All meetings will conform to Massachusetts open meeting laws.

Agenda, Minutes and Reports

The committee chair, in collaboration with the staff liaison, shall be responsible for establishing the agendas for meetings. An agenda, together with relevant materials, shall be provided to committee members at least 5 days in advance of the meeting. Minutes for all meetings shall be drafted by the staff liaison or designee, reviewed by the committee chair, and approved by committee members at the following meeting. Meeting materials will be posted on the University's website within 14 days after each committee meeting.



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
FINANCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
CHARTER**

I. Mission

The Financial Affairs Committee shall oversee all of Westfield State University's (WSU) finances, including financial controls and accounting systems in a transparent manner. It shall oversee the financial, legal and ethical integrity of WSU's financial records and financial reporting processes for WSU's operating accounts, reserves, capital assets/projects and all other financial matters consistent with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and Governmental Accounting and Standards Board (GASB) as well as Massachusetts General Laws.

II. Authority and Responsibilities

Policies

Establish, review, and update financial and investment policies for approval by the Board.

Oversight of Implementation

The Committee shall review the development of annual/multi-year all funds operating budgets prepared under the direction of the University President and Vice President for Administration & Finance and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees regarding their approval. The Committee shall review and monitor quarterly operating reports of income and expenditures and monitor compliance with WSU's investment policy. Major budget variances, significant trends or financial concerns shall be communicated to the WSU Board of Trustees in a timely manner.

The Financial Affairs Committee shall review proposed major financial transactions that are not included within Board-approved budgets. Proposed variances with recommendations shall be submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval.

The Committee shall also make recommendations to the Board in selecting the financial advisor for University investments and shall oversee the advisor in coordination with the Investment Subcommittee.

The Committee has the authority to establish subcommittees and/or working groups to monitor or focus on a specific topic or activity as deemed appropriate. A committee charge, membership, duration, and outcomes will be established if/or when such working groups are established and will report back to the Financial Affairs Committee on a regular basis.

Evaluate Performance

Review overall investment performance, asset allocation, and risk tolerance for short and long-term investments. It shall cause to be prepared and submitted to the Board of Trustees at least once a year an audited financial statement of WSU's financial condition.

Educate the Board

Board motions should contain enough background data to make an informed decision to properly carry out the Committee's fiduciary oversight responsibility. Further, Board materials should be sent in advance of all meetings. Adequate time should be allowed for discussion on substantive issues presented to the Committee.

III. Organization

Review of Charter

This charter shall be reviewed and reassessed by the Committee annually, and any proposed changes shall be submitted to the Board for approval.

Membership/Structure/Quorum

The Committee shall consist of at least five members. The Committee chair shall be appointed by the Board chair. Committee members should ideally have financial, investment, or business expertise. Committee membership shall not exceed the maximum term(s) as identified in the current bylaws.

Staff Liaison

The president shall designate a member of the University's senior administration to serve as a liaison to the Committee.

Meetings

The Committee shall meet in advance of each Board of Trustees meeting unless the Committee chair and Board chair determine that a meeting is not necessary. A quorum of any meeting of the Committee shall consist of a majority of its voting members. Committee members may participate by teleconference as permitted by state laws. All meetings will conform to Massachusetts open meeting laws.

Agenda, Minutes and Reports

The Committee chair, in collaboration with the staff liaison, shall be responsible for establishing the agendas for meetings. An agenda, together with relevant materials, shall be provided to Committee members at least five days in advance of the meeting. Minutes for all meetings shall be drafted by the staff liaison or designee, reviewed by the Committee chair, and approved by Committee members at the following meeting. All meeting materials will be posted on the University's website within 14 days after each Committee meeting, to ensure transparency of Board actions and oversight of the University.



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (JEDI) COMMITTEE
CHARTER**

I. Mission

The Board of Trustees, Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee (hereafter referred to as the JEDI Committee) shall work with the Board and the JEDI Division to advance justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion principles and initiatives at Westfield State University (WSU).

II. Authority and Responsibilities

Policies

The JEDI Committee of the Board of Trustees, in concert with the JEDI Division, ensures that transparency and excellence remain at the forefront of JEDI endeavors and projects at WSU. The JEDI Committee supports, monitors, and provides guidance as WSU develops the appropriate means to address equity, diversity, and inclusivity strategic priorities. The JEDI Committee leads the Board's engagement on JEDI issues and helps trustees gain the skills necessary to meet the needs of and reflect the diverse University community they serve. Other activities of this committee are listed below.

- (1) Connect JEDI principles to the WSU mission within its larger governing responsibilities as a committee of the WSU Board of Trustees.
- (2) Provide input into initiatives led by the JEDI Division.
- (3) Define institutional-level JEDI priorities, goals, and action steps.
- (4) Ensure that JEDI initiatives are well integrated across campus.
- (5) Help assess, create, refine, and institutionalize policies rooted in JEDI principles at WSU.
- (6) Adopt specific initiatives to champion and oversee.
- (7) Play an active role in internal and external events with the JEDI Division (i.e., Host and/or attend JEDI-related informational, educational, and awareness events and activities.)
- (8) Embody and advocate for JEDI principles.

Oversight of Implementation

Recognize the role and responsibilities of the JEDI Division Vice President in developing and implementing programs/initiatives that promote a thriving, diverse, multicultural, equitable, ethical, and inclusive campus.

Evaluate Performance

Monitor, review, and evaluate the progress and process of the JEDI Committee and the broader JEDI efforts into which the committee provides oversight and input.

Educate the Board

- Understand the campus-wide JEDI plan and the relationship among its components.
- Communicate JEDI Committee activities and all other relevant JEDI information, concerns, and recommendations to the Board.
- Leverage their positions as committee members to involve and engage other trustees and community leaders in resource development, fundraising, relationship cultivation, and recognition events.
- Actively promote and support WSU's JEDI initiatives.

III. Organization

Review of Charter

This charter shall be reviewed and reassessed by the JEDI committee annually, and any proposed changes shall be submitted to the Board for approval.

Membership/Structure/Quorum

The JEDI Committee shall consist of at least five members. The committee chair shall be appointed by the Board chair.

Staff Liaison

The president shall designate a member of the University's senior administration to serve as liaison to the committee.

Meetings

The JEDI committee shall meet in advance of each Board of Trustees meeting unless the committee chair and Board chair determine that a meeting is not necessary. A quorum of any meeting of the JEDI committee shall consist of a majority of its voting members. Committee members may participate by teleconference as permitted by state laws. All meetings will conform to Massachusetts open meeting laws.

Agenda, Minutes, and Reports

The chair, in collaboration with the staff liaison, shall be responsible for establishing the agendas for meetings. An agenda, together with relevant materials, shall be provided to committee members at least five days in advance of each meeting. Minutes for all meetings shall be drafted by the staff liaison or designee, reviewed by the committee chair, and approved by committee members at the next meeting. Meeting materials will be posted on the University's website within 14 days after each committee meeting.