



## **Board of Trustees**

Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee

**February 20, 2025**

**Minutes**

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM

Owl's Nest, Ely Campus Center

A live stream of the meeting for public viewing will also take place at the following link: <https://www.westfield.ma.edu/live>

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Committee Chair Tessa Lucey, Vice Chair Michael O'Rourke, and Board Chair Ali Salehi, ex-officio member.

**TRUSTEE(S) PARTICIPATING REMOTELY:** Trustee George Gilmer

**TRUSTEE(S) EXCUSED:** Trustees Melissa Alvarado, and Dr. Gloria Williams

Also present and participating were Westfield State University President, Dr. Linda Thompson; Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. William Salka; and Director of Belonging, Inclusion, and Learning, Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola.

Committee Chair Tessa Lucey called the meeting to order at 10:15 AM and a roll call was taken of the committee members participating as listed above. It was announced that the meeting was being livestreamed and recorded.

**MOTION** made by Trustee O'Rourke seconded by Trustee Gilmer to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2024, meeting. There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE**, motion passed.

**MOTION** made by Trustee O'Rourke seconded by Trustee Gilmer to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2024, meeting. There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE**, motion passed.

Dr. William Salka opened with, "In these very challenging times, it is incredibly important that all of our students feel like they are included and belong at Westfield State University."

### **Staffing Updates**

- Jane Kungu was hired as the Senior Coordinator for Multicultural Programming.
  - Westfield State University alumni.
  - Will support initiatives and be a point of contact for affinity groups (faith and heritage based) and their advisors.
- Marjorie Rodriguez transitioned into the Office of Belonging, Inclusion and Learning.
  - As Assistant Director for Student Access and Support, she helps foster care youth and housing insecure students.

### **Newsletter Launch**

- Launched a newsletter starting with Black History Month.
- Sent to everyone on campus to update the community on office initiatives and provide educational context on cultural heritage celebrations.
  - Includes campus and local community events (virtual and in person).
  - Includes updates on fostering/belonging on campus, including a list of events and a student spotlight section.

### **Website Launch**

- Launched the Belonging, Inclusion and Learning website.
  - Includes office description, mission, and vision.
  - Lists all affinity groups with links to their page.

### **Bias Reporting and Education Support**

- Bias reporting system is seen as a way to streamline information and can offer education support to the campus community.
  - Educational themes included racial bias, discrimination, ableism, and other topics.
- There have been five biased reported incidents since the beginning of the semester.
  - All incidents have been followed up on, and action has been taken.
- During the last Bias Education, Support Team (BEST) meeting on January 16th, themes were discussed and training was planned for the future.
- There was a desire for a "train the trainer" opportunity to formalize expertise and have modules accessible for different learning styles.

### **Black History Month Programming**

- Black History Month programming was expansive, with educational events, performances, and opportunities for dialogue.
- Bilqis Abdul-Qaadir, a local social justice advocate and former collegiate basketball player, was hosted with support from the Muslim Student Organization. About 35-40 students attended.
- Ashlee Haze, an Atlanta-based poet, did a slam and book reading.
- An alumni speaker event featured Ayana Crawford, who spoke about her consultancy journey.

### **Palate to Palate Mural School with Diversity Competition**

- Voting was finalized with 385 votes from campus stakeholders.
- The winning mural, by Anna Jean Rucci, will be installed in the dining common after approval by the public art committee.
- The winner will receive a catered party, and a global cuisine reveal night, along with custom swag featuring their artwork. This was in conjunction with the dining services team.

### **Upcoming Events and Connections**

- Unity Fest is scheduled for the week of April 7th, with student voices being centered in the planning process.
- Sankofa is scheduled for April 29th, and a call for planning committee members went out.
- Connections with Dress for Success Springfield helped students get formal attire for the Keeper of the Dream event.

- Monthly affinity group dinners started, with the first one on January 30th, catered by Santiago's Family Restaurant, with 40-45 students attending.
- Office hours are being held with the Dean of Students to capture student voices and identify areas of opportunity.
- March will feature a series of events for Women's History Month, partnering with Christina's House in Springfield for a day of service on International Women's Day, doing a spring cleaning for the shelter.
- April will be a busy month, celebrating Arab American Heritage, and sexual assault and domestic violence prevention with the counseling center.

There being no further business,

**MOTION** made by Trustee Gilmer, and seconded by Trustee O'Rourke, to adjourn.  
**ROLL CALL VOTE passed motion unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:33 AM.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

- Minutes of October 23, 2024
- Minutes of December 9, 2024
- Belonging, Inclusion and Learning Presentation

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

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

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Melissa Alvarado, Secretary

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Date