



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Academic Affairs Committee

April 25, 2024

Minutes

Loughman Living Room, Scanlon Hall

A live stream of the meeting for public viewing also took place on YouTube.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Committee Chair Dr. Robert Martin, Vice Chair Dr. Gloria Williams, Secretary William Reichelt, and Trustees Daniel Currier, George Gilmer, Madeline Landrau and Board Chair Ali Salehi, ex-officio member.

Also present were Westfield State University President Dr. Linda Thompson, Provost Dr. David Caruso, and Dean of the School of Health, Natural Sciences and Human Services, Dr. Ziblim Abukari and Dean of the School of Business, Mathematics, Computing & Sustainability, Dr. Rebecca Morris.

Committee Chair Martin called the meeting to order at 10:40 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 Currier seconded by Trustee Gilmore to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2024, meeting.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Trustee Williams	Yes
Trustee Reichelt	Yes
Trustee Currier	Yes
Trustee Gilmer	Yes
Trustee Martin	Yes

There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE** passed motion unanimously.

Academic Affairs College/Deans Reorganization

Provost Caruso referred to the Two College Organizational Structure that will be implemented on July 1, 2024. The Senior Leadership will consist of two Interim Deans with support staff. This was vetted with faculty via chair meetings. The Provost received positive feedback. During the Pandemic the University had a four-college structure which made it difficult to manage effectively and was quite costly to the university.

Faculty Evaluation Systems Summary

Explanation given by Provost Caruso regarding the process. By the time the faculty get to tenure, they have had several evaluations from their peers, department chair, dean of the college and from the Provost. Part of the evaluation includes attending a class of the faculty member. The university

also has a Tenure Committee that conducts an evaluation and brings to the Provost their decision which is then given to the President to be presented to the Board of Trustees. Similarly, this is done for the Promotion of Faculty as well.

MOTION made by Trustee Martin, seconded by Trustee Gloria Williams,
The granting of promotion to the rank of Associate Professor, effective September 1, 2024, to:
Dr. Charles DiStefano Political Science
Dr. Ashley Evanoski-Cole Chemical & Physical Science
Dr. Mao-Lun Weng Biology

The granting of promotion the rank of Professor, effective September 1, 2024:
Dr. Peter Coutsouridis Music
Dr. Sinuk Kang Communications
Dr. Joan Kuhnly Nursing
Dr. Liem Nguyen Accounting & Finance
Dr. Marcia Scanlon Nursing
Dr. Robin White Biology

The granting of promotion the rank of Senior Librarian effective September 1, 2024, to:
Ms. Rebecca Brody Library

There being no discussion, the motion passed unanimously with Trustees voting in the affirmative:
Williams, Reichelt, Currier, Gilmer, Landrau and Martin.

MOTION made by Trustee Martin, seconded by Trustee Currier,
The granting of tenure, effective September 1, 2024, to:
Dr. Amanda Salacinski Sports Medicine and Human Performance
Dr. Lauren DiCarlo Environmental Science

The granting of tenure with automatic promotion, effective September 1, 2024, to:
Dr. Roderico Acevedo Chemical & Physical Science
Dr. Maureen Dimock Clark Social Work

There being no discussion, the motion passed unanimously with Trustees voting in the affirmative:
Williams, Reichelt, Currier, Gilmer, Landrau and Martin.

Key Performance Indicators

The Provost referred to the attachment labeled Key Performance Indicators within Strategic Planning Priorities. Three areas to start with are Campus Culture, Value for our Students and Financial Stability. This was considered a great start with collecting data. There were many suggestions made for the various committees. Benchmark timeline from the Cabinet feasibly can be brought to the Board by the fall 2024 in draft form.

There being no further business, **MOTION** made by Trustee Currier, seconded by Trustee Williams to adjourn. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 11:30am.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

- a. Draft Minutes of February 8, 2024
- b. Two College Organizational Structure
- c. Faculty Evaluation Systems Summary
- d. Promotion Candidate Summaries
- e. Promotion Personnel Action
- f. Motion for Faculty Promotion
- g. Tenure Candidate Summaries
- h. Tenure Personnel Action
- i. Motion for Tenure Promotion
- j. Key Performance Indicators

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 Academic Affairs Committee meeting held on April 25, 2024.

William Reichelt, Secretary

Date



Board of Trustees

June 20, 2024

MOTION

The Academic Affairs committee recommends approval to the full Board:

To approve the Master in Business Administration (MBA)

PHASE I: LETTER OF INTENT TEMPLATE
FOR BOARD VOTE ON APPROVAL PROCESS

Review Guidelines Prior to Submitting Materials

<https://www.mass.edu/foradmin/academic/publicnewdegrees.asp>

Information should be typed directly into the boxes below, which will expand. Letter of Intent (LOI) document should be about five to six pages in addition to appendices. After the local approval process for the LOI has been completed, the President of the institution should submit this template and all required forms addressed to the Commissioner of Higher Education, and to the Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) of the Board of Higher Education (BHE).

Submissions are required to be in MS Word format. Please direct the completed to:
PublicProgramReview@dhe.mass.edu

Proposed Degree Title and Intent and Mission of the Program (200 words):

Westfield State University

Master of Business Administration
(MBA) Intent and Mission of the
Program

The Westfield State University (WSU) MBA Program is committed to cultivating visionary leaders with a unique blend of leadership, business analytics, and sustainability skills. Our mission is to empower individuals with the knowledge, skills, and ethical mindset needed to excel in today's dynamic global business landscape.

In the WSU MBA, we foster a learning environment that encourages critical thinking, innovation, and collaboration. We encourage experiential learning opportunities, internships, and industry collaborations to provide our students with hands-on experiences that enhance their leadership and analytical capabilities

We develop leaders who can navigate the complexities of the modern business world, making informed decisions that drive organizational success and contribute to societal and environmental well-being.

As an institution, we are dedicated to fostering a diverse and inclusive community where individuals from different backgrounds can exchange ideas and perspectives. We believe a diverse learning environment enriches the educational experience and prepares students to lead in a globalized world.

We aim to graduate individuals who can drive positive change, lead with integrity, and contribute meaningfully to improving businesses and society.

Proposed CIP Code: 52.0201 Business Administration and Management, General

Chief Academic Officer (CAO) Name and Title: Dr. David Caruso, Temporary Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs

CAO Phone Number: 413-572-8691

CAO Email: dcaruso@westfield.ma.edu

Has the Chief Academic Officer reviewed this LOI? Yes

Date LOI was approved by governing authority: June 20, 2024

A. Alignment with Massachusetts Goals for Public Higher Education

The FY19 BHE Equity Statement (<https://www.mass.edu/strategic/equity.asp>) provides campuses with insight into the next iteration of the system-level plans.

1. How does the program address institutional gaps in opportunity and achievement? How does the program align with campus goals?

The WSU MBA program can effectively address institutional gaps in opportunity and achievement while also aligning with campus goals in the following ways:

Addressing Institutional Gaps: The WSU MBA program will promote diversity and inclusion by admitting a diverse group of students. Our recruiting efforts will be designed to remove barriers and obstacles that hinder student success, especially those that may make it difficult for students of color. Westfield State University's MBA will be a more accessible and affordable education option for students who seek advanced education in business. Programming of guest speakers, panels and other opportunities for students to network with business professionals will focus on engaging diverse representatives to acknowledge the experience and knowledge of people of color and to create and cultivate an inclusive environment.

Aligning with Campus Goals: The WSU MBA will enhance the overall academic excellence of Westfield State University. It aligns with campus goals to offer high-quality, relevant, and competitive educational programs. Our strategic plan insists we are responsive to the workforce needs in the Commonwealth and the MBA program delivers on the need for skilled finance professionals as one of the high demand areas identified in the Pioneer Valley Workforce Development Programs. It can support state initiatives to address sustainability concerns in business through the Business Sustainability Certificate while also providing strong educational programming to develop in emerging areas such as Business Analytics. MBA graduates with the

Business Analytics Certificate will assist local and regional business organizations to become more efficient in their operations, build stronger consumer relationships, and improve business decision-making. Managers armed with the knowledge from business analytic insights can increase market share, boost profits, improve operational efficiency, and better meet customer demands. These benefits may be particularly critical to firms operating in the Advanced Manufacturing industry as they address challenges in rapidly changing and intensely competitive industry sectors as addressed in the Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint.

In summary, the Master of Business Administration program at Westfield State University with Certificates in Business Leadership, Global Sustainability for Business and Business Analytics was designed to not only address institutional gaps in opportunity and achievement, but also aligns with the strategic goals of the University. The MBA can enhance diversity, accessibility, academic excellence, innovation, and community engagement, while also contributing to the development of a skilled business workforce.

2. What program or department supports and practices are in place to ensure that students persist and complete the certifications and degrees offered by the program?

Westfield State University has many supports and practices in place to ensure that students persist and complete the certifications and degrees offered by the MBA program including:

Program Design: The WSU MBA program was designed to minimize barriers and obstacles to program completion. Admission requirements for students without an undergraduate business degree were simplified to ensure that all students can quickly enter the program and begin MBA coursework without extensive foundational course requirements. Course prerequisites were minimized where possible to permit students to complete requirements regardless of the time of year they are admitted to the program. Few prerequisites make course sequencing much easier for students and permits more efficient completion of degree requirements. Designed as a stackable certificate program, the WSU MBA will appeal to students interested in completing a relevant Certificate program to advance to new positions or upgrade their skills for existing positions while also appealing to students who want to achieve the MBA degree.

Academic Advising: Dedicated MBA advisors will work closely with students to develop personalized plans of study, track their progress, and provide guidance throughout their program. Academic advisors can help students navigate the curriculum, understand certificate and degree requirements, and make informed decisions regarding course selection.

Student Support Services: WSU has a range of student support services available to assist MBA students. These services include financial aid, writing assistance, career assistance, and technology. As a result of our recent NECHE accreditation study, increased support for graduate students has become an important goal. New

initiatives may be forthcoming. Existing services and any new ones that are developed are designed to help students strengthen their academic skills and overcome challenges encountered in their programs.

Faculty Mentorship: Faculty members teaching in the program will provide mentorship and guidance to students. They can offer academic and professional advice and support students in their research for the capstone project. Business professionals teaching in the MBA program will have extensive industry experience and can offer valuable insights into career paths, job market trends, and industry specific skills to help students leverage their MBA education for career advancement. Faculty mentors also serve as role models for professionalism and ethical behavior, guiding students in developing the skills and attributes necessary for success in the business world.

Professional Development Opportunities: Workshops, seminars, and networking events may be offered to help students build their skills and knowledge beyond their classes. Students can engage with experts in the field to enhance their professional development and leadership abilities. Students will also work with business professionals when completing their Applied Integrative Project capstone project as outlined in the next section of this report.

Continuous Program Evaluation: As part of assessment initiatives, the MBA program will engage in ongoing evaluation to assess the effectiveness of its curriculum, teaching methods, and support structures. Soliciting feedback from students through surveys, focus groups, and evaluations will provide insights into students' experiences, satisfaction levels, and to identify areas for improvement. We will also seek input from employers and industry professionals to ensure alignment of the curriculum with employer expectations and demands. We will use this input to inform curriculum design, career services, and student support services to better meet the needs of employers and to enhance the employability of our graduates. Overall, these supports and practices work together to create an encouraging environment to help students maximize their learning experience and achieve their academic and professional goals.

3. Please describe relevant, alliances and partnerships with PK-12, other institutions of higher education, and the employer community. If you have or plan to convene an advisory group for this proposed program, please explain. Describe how information from an advisory will be used to develop and refine the program.

Westfield State University's MBA Program will form partnerships and alliances with the employer community to develop sponsorships for the Applied Integrative Project course in terms of consulting projects. The consulting projects are intended to provide students with an opportunity to conduct fieldwork to develop strategic recommendations for a real company. Sponsoring companies will provide funding, access and support for a team of students to gather information about a current

strategic issue/problem and to formulate data-supported strategic recommendations. The team will present their recommendations (through presentations and written reports) to the company. Each consulting project will be supervised by a member of the WSU MBA faculty who will work with the company to define the project specifications prior to the team's work. The faculty member will also review the completed project to ensure that the recommendations are appropriate.

WSU will also develop an advisory board for the MBA program. The advisory board will be asked to develop and refine the program in the following ways:

- **Industry Insight and Trends:** Board members bring their experience and insight from business to keep the program updated on industry trends, emerging technologies and changing market demands.
- **Curriculum Review and Development:** Board members provide feedback on the program/s curriculum to ensure it remains current, relevant and aligned with industry standards. They can help identify new Certificates for inclusion in the program or new courses within existing Certificates.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Board members can generate guest lectures, workshops, internships and job placements for students.
- **Quality Assurance:** Board members help ensure the quality of the education by reviewing program outcomes and student performance data to identify areas for improvement. They can provide constructive feedback to improve the program's effectiveness.
- **Accreditation:** Should WSU pursue accreditation for its business programs, board members can ensure the MBA program follows best practices and accreditation standards

4. If the proposed program is designed for students to enter an employment area of demonstrated need in the regional and/or statewide labor market, provide evidence including references to workforce development plans (e.g. MassHire Regional Blueprints, <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/view-your-regions-blueprint>), showing market need and employer engagement. If it is not directly labor market aligned, identify the career options related to the proposed program and explain how students will be made aware of them. Do not rely on Bureau of Labor Statistics projections in this section.

The Westfield State University MBA program was designed to prepare students for employment in the regional labor market as identified in the *Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint* as updated in 2020¹. The report identifies Advanced Manufacturing Occupational Groups and Cross-Industry Occupations as priorities for the region WSU serves. In Advanced Manufacturing, regional firms are considering re-purposing their factories to better meet current product demand. Students earning the Business Analytics Certificate as part of the WSU MBA program would provide these firms with the analytical abilities to determine what types of products would be most successful going forward. Students earning the Global Sustainability Certificate could assist these businesses by recommending ways for firms to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their manufacturing processes. Students earning the Business Leadership Certificate would be able to effectively manage the transformation of these firms.

Advanced Manufacturing employees with undergraduate degrees in engineering may choose to pursue an MBA so that they can move into project management and upper management positions in the industry. The focus of the WSU MBA on leadership, business analytics, and sustainability can assist engineers to move from supervising equipment upgrades to managing the manufacturing facility. Pairing an MBA with an engineering degree can result in significant salary increases. Regional manufacturing organizations employing WSU MBA graduates should experience enhancements in the managerial, analytical, and sustainability skills of their employees. These improvements should improve the survival and transformation of these businesses.

Sustainability in the form of Climate & Clean Energy is one of the Healy-Driscoll administration's priorities. In the Governor's inaugural address, she emphasized the goal of making Massachusetts "a world leader in combating the climate crisis and driving our clean energy economy."² WSU MBA graduates and Global Sustainability Certificate holders will be well equipped to assist Massachusetts businesses in improving their organization's sustainability practices.

¹ MassHire Workforce Boards of Hampden and Franklin Hampshire Counties (Region 2). (2020, September). *Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint Update 2020* - [mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov). MassHire Hampden

² Healey, M., & Driscoll, K. (2024). *The Healy-Driscoll Administration's priorities*. [mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/the-healey-driscoll-administrations-priorities#climate-&-clean-energy-).

The Pioneer Valley Blueprint also envisions finance and insurance as two other critical industries for the region. Big-data capabilities are becoming a critical need for insurance companies. The predictive analytics to understand consumer behavior, set prices, and save costs are key components in the study of business analytics.

Detecting insurance fraud is another important application of big-data sets in the insurance industry. The Business Analytics certificate provided by the WSU MBA would prepare students with the skills necessary for developing insights from big-data. By employing MBA graduates with the Business Analytics Certificate, regional manufacturing organizations could improve their data-informed decision-making.

Data-driven decision making is also becoming important in the financial services industry. Finance professionals are using analytics to improve services to customers, recognize fraudulent purchases, monitor upcoming market trends, and reduce production costs. The WSU MBA will prepare graduates well for positions in the finance industry.

In addition to alignment with regional labor market priorities, the WSU MBA program prepares students for in-demand career options identified in the 2024 market analysis study provided by Lightcast.

The market analysis study for the overall MBA program (including sustainability studies and business analytics) for the northeast region (including Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont) showed that jobs for MBAs were expected to increase by 25% in the years between 2021-2033. Median earnings for those positions in the northeast were 18% higher than for the nation. Annual job openings for MBAs were expected to reach 48,057. (Lightcast report is attached as Appendix 2)

The top ten occupations as ranked by the number of jobs and annual openings for MBAs in the region are shown in the table below:

Target Occupations for MBA Graduates in the Northeast Region			
Occupation	2021 Jobs	Annual Job Openings	Expected Growth (2021-2033)
Accountants and Auditors	50,304	5,129	+19.73%
General and Operations Managers	44,897	5,110	+26.06%
Management Analysts	36,947	4,151	+24.89%
Market Research Analysts & Marketing Specialists	26,119	3,571	+34.48%
Project Management Specialists	23,395	2,493	+29.64%
Financial Managers	22,436	2,406	+33.13%
Computer & Information Systems Managers	18,202	1,903	+33.83%
Human Resource Specialists	16,379	2,072	+32.87%
Business Operations Specialists	15,158	1,845	+27.65%
Managers, All Other	14,519	1,379	+18.02%

A total of 41 occupations targeting MBA graduates with business analytics and sustainability studies coursework were shown in the Lightcast report. The diverse occupations listed demonstrate the versatility of the WSU MBA program and the high market demand for individuals with this preparation.

The market analysis for occupations targeting MBA graduates with a focus on business analytics is summarized in the table below:

Target Occupations for MBA Graduates in the Northeast Region with Business Analytics			
Occupation	2021 Jobs	Annual Openings	Expected Growth (2021-2033)
Management Analysts	39,350	4,084	+10.04%
Market Research Analysts & Marketing Specialists	29,004	3,448	+12.02%
Business Operations Specialists	16,119	3,803	+11.18%
Managers, All Other	15,126	1,349	+7.24%
Sales Representatives of Services except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	12,123	1,373	+8.31%
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing Except Technical and Scientific Products	9,754	938	+2.85%
Data Scientists	8,437	929	+22.65%
Chief Executives	8,013	602	+2.98%
Sales Managers	7,904	692	+6.44%
Statisticians	1,899	203	+20.96%

Data from Lightcast Q1 2024 report

Only four of the target occupations from the previous table are repeated in the list of occupations with a business analytics focus. The other seven target occupations are unique to the business analytics area. Growth rates in the occupations of Data Scientists and Statisticians reflect the rapid growth in data/business analytics. Good job opportunities should be attractive to prospective students.

When studying labor market demand for a graduate degree and sustainability focus, the top states for jobs included New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. The top qualification for sustainability jobs in the northeast region was an MBA degree. The specialized skills in the job profiles evaluated by Lightcast included sustainability improvement, sustainability evaluation, leadership, analytics, and business skills. The design of the WSU MBA is highly consistent with employer stated needs for open positions. Students wishing to earn the MBA with the Sustainability Certificate will find employment opportunities within the northeast region.

MBA students will be made aware of career opportunities through Westfield State University's Career Center in the form of career development advising, job fairs, and professional networking events. Virtual professional development opportunities also be offered through webinars. MBA students will be encouraged to take advantage of professional networking opportunities through the WSU Alumni Association to learn more about career options.

5. Are there existing programs at other institutions (public and independent) in your region that offer a similar degree? If so, compare and contrast them with the proposed program.

In developing the Westfield State University MBA program, we began by studying the MBA offerings of other institutions within the region. The comparative analysis of regional MBA programs is summarized in **Appendix 1** of this report. We drew the following conclusions from our analysis:

- Although the number of credits required for MBA programs at regional universities varied from a high of 48 credits (Clark University, Framingham State University) to 30 credits (Bay Path, Bentley, Central Connecticut, Fitchburg, MCLA), the trend is for fewer credits. The proposed WSU MBA is 30 credits.
- MBA degrees have typically been generalist degrees in advanced business. The current trend seems to be to offer specialties or concentrations in the MBA. We noted that several programs had concentrations in Business Analytics while no programs offered a concentration in Sustainability. The proposed WSU MBA offers a Certificate in Business Analytics OR a Certificate in Global Sustainability for Business. The program also offers a Certificate in Business Leadership (required of all MBA students). The WSU MBA is on trend with the emphasis on Business Analytics but has no competitors in the Global Sustainability for Business space. Some programs offer individual courses in business sustainability, but no concentration. There is only one other program offering a concentration in Leadership (Western New England University). The design of the WSU MBA is distinctive and unique in the region.
- The delivery format for MBA programs has shifted to embrace online course delivery. Many of the programs studied offer both in-person and online programs. The WSU MBA has been developed as a 100% online program to provide students with the flexibility they need as working adults. Recent studies have shown strong student preferences for online courses in MBA programs.³
- Tuition and fees for the MBA differ widely, ranging from \$58,650 (Bentley University) to a low of \$13,080 (Fitchburg State University). At the current graduate tuition rates for Westfield State University, the full cost of the WSU MBA would be \$11,940, the lowest cost of the 17 regional universities we studied.

³ Stokes, K. (2023, April 13). *State of the Graduate Education Market: Trends & Insights in Key Graduate Markets 2023*. Wiley. <https://universityservices.wiley.com/state-of-the-graduate-education-market>

In short, we designed the WSU MBA to distinguish it from other MBA programs in the region. The WSU MBA program is differentiated by its unique curriculum emphasis, specialize concentrations, experiential learning opportunities, affordability, and flexibility and accessibility. These qualities will serve to attract students who wish to differentiate themselves in a competitive employment market.

The program is a stackable certificate program where students complete a Business Leadership Certificate and choose between a Business Analytics Certificate, or a Global Sustainability Certificate. The program is an online, 30-credit graduate program, offering the quick completion and flexible delivery students desire. The certificates in the program were chosen to align with skills employers say are important now and will continue to be in the next five years such as leadership, data analysis & interpretation, decision-making processes, strategy.

The WSU MBA was also designed to meet the need of today’s MBA students in that it provides pathways for part-time education, quicker goal attainment, and flexibility via online asynchronous delivery.

6. Has the proposed program been planned to include any significant digital, experiential, competency-based or other innovative approaches? Please explain and provide examples.

WSU’s MBA program has been designed to incorporate many high impact practices (HIPs) to improve the student learning experience. HIPs to be incorporated include:

- Capstone Courses and Projects: Students will have three options for completing the capstone project: 1) Consulting Project (described in the response to question 3 above), 2) a Strategic Analysis Project incorporating similar analysis to the Consulting Project but utilizing secondary sources rather than primary sources such as in-person interviews and company tours, and 3) Study Abroad Projects which involves combining academic learning with cultural immersion and practical exposure to global business environments. In all three options, students will develop a strong understanding of business environments including economic, political, legal, and socio-culture factors that impact business operations. Students will also develop strategic-thinking skills by examining how businesses formulate and execute business strategies, conducting market research, and evaluating the competitive landscape. These projects will allow students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world business challenges in different contexts.
- Collaborative Assignments and Projects: Collaborative assignments and projects will prepare students for teamwork in the workplace by simulating real-world scenarios where students must work together to achieve common goals. Students will develop teamwork skills such as communication, conflict resolution, and collaboration.
- Diversity/Global Learning: MBA programs typically attract students from diverse backgrounds, different industries, cultures, and academic

disciplines. Collaborative assignments will provide opportunities for students to leverage this diversity and learn from each other's unique perspectives, experiences, and expertise. The Study Abroad Capstone option will help develop students' cultural awareness, sensitivity, and adaptability by immersing them in a different cultural context.

- Case Analysis: Case studies allow students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world business situations, helping them to develop a deeper understanding of how theoretical concepts translate into practical decision-making. Students must critically analyze complex business problems, identify relevant information, and propose solutions or strategies. This process cultivates students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills which are critical components for business leaders.
- Experiential Learning Opportunities—Many MBA courses will virtually utilize software data provided by the WSU Finance/Data Analytics Lab so that students can have access to cutting-edge analytical tools (such as statistical and data visualization software) and live (and historical) financial data feeds. In finance courses, students will be able to develop stock portfolios and see how they perform when market conditions are simulated. Statistical software will permit identification of patterns in large data sets so that students can drive insights into business activities when developing strategic recommendations. The capstone project courses provide opportunities for students to gain insight into real-world business challenges.

Overall, the Westfield State University MBA program is innovative in its design as a stackable certificate program that leads to a graduate degree, and will use significant digital and experiential learning components to provide students with a learning experience that will prepare them for success in the complex and dynamic field of business.

B. Alignment with Campus Strategic Plan and Mission

1. Describe why the proposed program is a priority, and how it supports the campus's approved strategic plan, in the context of the institution's mission.

The proposed MBA is a priority and supports Westfield State University's approved strategic plan in multiple ways, aligning with the institution's mission as a public University offering accessible quality graduate programs.

The MBA program contributes to WSU's commitment to providing accessible quality graduate programs. The design of the WSU MBA program prioritizes affordability, flexibility, diversity, inclusivity, student support, academic excellence, experiential learning, and career development so that students achieve their academic and professional goals.

The program enhances student engagement and success by creating an interactive learning environment, fostering peer learning and collaboration, providing access to industry experts and career development resources, offering personalized academic support, providing experiential learning opportunities, and focusing on leadership development. These elements will collectively contribute to the holistic growth and professional success of our students.

The MBA program contributes to the economic, social, and cultural growth of the northeast region. The WSU MBA program will cultivate business leaders, entrepreneurs, and managers with the skills and knowledge to drive economic growth. Graduates will contribute to innovation, productivity, and competitiveness in industries from finance and technology to healthcare and manufacturing. By fostering an inclusive learning environment, the WSU MBA will prepare students to lead diverse teams and organizations, promote equity and social justice, and contribute to a more inclusive society. As a hub for networking, collaboration, and knowledge exchange among students, alumni, faculty, and industry professionals, the MBA students and graduates will make connections that facilitate the exchange of ideas, experiences, and resources that foster a vibrant community within the region.

The program aligns with Westfield State University's mission of developing responsible leaders and engaged citizens. The MBA Business Leadership Certificate (Required of all MBAs) focuses on the development of students' leadership skills and prepares students to be ethical and socially responsible leaders. Students will use self-assessment tools, and feedback from peers and mentors, to identify their personal strengths, weaknesses, and leadership goals. They will then develop a personalized leadership development plan with action steps for ongoing growth and improvement. The courses in the Leadership Certificate provides students with opportunities to develop values of social responsibility, ethical practice, and community engagement, preparing graduates to be active contributors to society and engaged citizens in the northeast region.

In summary, the proposed MBA program at Westfield State University is a priority that supports the institution's mission by providing accessible quality programs, promoting student engagement and success, contributing to economic and social growth, and developing responsible leaders and citizens. The program aligns with the University's commitment to education, community engagement, and the overall well-being of the northeast region.

2. List the overall goals and learning objectives of the program and describe the strategy for achieving each goal. Use the **LOI Program Goals and Objectives** table in addition to any narrative comments.

The overall goals and learning objectives of the Westfield State University MBA program revolve around equipping students with the knowledge, skills and capabilities

needed to succeed as effective leaders in the dynamic business environment. Students completing the WSU MBA should be able to:

- Demonstrate advanced knowledge in areas such as business management, accounting, finance, marketing, and strategic planning.
- Develop critical thinking, decision-making, leadership and communication skills to drive organizational success and contribute to societal well-being.
- Thrive in a diverse and inclusive community where individuals from different backgrounds can exchange ideas and perspectives.
- Develop the ethical mindset needed to lead with integrity in today's dynamic global business landscape.
- Integrate knowledge and formulate strategies to contribute meaningfully to improving businesses and society.
-

Details of the assessment of these goals are provided in Form B.

C. Alignment with Operational and Financial Objectives of the Institution

1. Provide enrollment projections for the first five years of the program using the Program Enrollment form (Form C), Describe below any anticipated impact that the program may have on enrollment in other programs.

Form C provides conservative estimates for enrollment of full and part-time MBA enrollments for the first five years of the program and certificate enrollments for the same period. (We will file the necessary forms for approval of the three certificates (Business Leadership, Business Analytics, and Global Sustainability for Business after the MBA program is approved). We anticipate that most students will enroll in the MBA program as part-time students with few full-time students.

Enrollment growth was estimated to be only 3% per year. As will be shown in the proforma statements in Form D, the program is profitable from the first year even with modest enrollment growth.

Focus groups with senior business students at WSU indicated a strong interest in the design of the MBA program and its certificates. Several students expressed interest in the Business Analytics certificate since WSU currently offers few undergraduate courses in this area. Students interested in sustainability issues thought the Global Sustainability for Business Certificate would be beneficial for students receiving undergraduate degrees in Regional Planning or Environmental Science. We hope to attract many MBA and certificate students from the WSU undergraduate programs.

We anticipate modest impact on enrollment in other graduate programs offered by WSU. Students in other graduate programs such as the Master of Public Administration, the Master of Science in Accounting, or the Health Innovation and

Leadership degree (under development in Nursing) may wish to enroll in MBA courses that are complimentary to their degree programs.

2. Describe the resources that the program will require (additional faculty and/or staff, space and equipment, on-line infrastructure, startup and maintenance of the program). Please include a narrative or financial statement outlining the anticipated net impact of the program on the overall financial resources of the institution. Include five years of future projections of revenue and expense using the LOI Budget form (**Form D**).

The existing business faculty have expressed interest in teaching in the MBA program. Faculty are interested in working with advanced students and see the MBA courses as welcomed changes of pace in their teaching. We anticipate that many of these faculty will teach an MBA class as an addition to their traditional four/four workload. Few faculty will teach an MBA course as part of their day workload. This will permit WSU to offer the MBA program without adding additional faculty members. Additional adjuncts may be needed to teach specialized courses within the program. The proforma budget in Form D was built to reflect the teaching of many courses in the program by Day program faculty at the DCGE salary rate. Only two adjunct faculty were included in the budget. As the program becomes profitable, WSU may wish to use some of the profits to hire additional faculty to serve the MBA program.

As a 100% online program, no additional classroom or office space will be required for the MBA and Certificates. Faculty will utilize WSU's learning management system (LMS) to provide online content for students.

The budget includes a part-time staff member to serve as the program's administrative assistant. The administrative assistant will report to the Program Area Chair. The Program Area Chair (PAC) will serve as the director for the MBA program and associated Certificates. The PAC may appoint other faculty members to serve as Program Advisors. Both the PAC and Program Advisors will be compensated at the typical rate for all graduate programs at WSU.

The budget includes approximately \$10,000/year in funding for marketing and professional travel. These areas will be critical to the startup and maintenance of the program. These funds will be used to promote the program (online and in print), to host recruiting events (virtually and in person), and to recruit students through visits to businesses in the region.

We have also included a modest budget of \$500/yr to host professional development workshops, guest speakers, and webinars. These events will enhance the student experience in the program by providing opportunities for students to interact with experts and specialists.

The complete budget is provided as Form D. Even with the conservative enrollment projections and the inclusion of existing faculty as instructors (at a higher cost than adjuncts), the MBA program is profitable from the first year.

ATTACHMENTS:

Form A	LOI Curriculum Outline
Form B	LOI Goals and Objectives
Form C	LOI Enrollment Projections
Form D	LOI Budget
Appendix 1	Comparative Analysis of MBA Programs in the Region
Appendix 2	Lightcast Market Analysis Report (separate document)

Form A2: LOI Graduate Program Curriculum Outline
(Insert additional rows as necessary.)

<i>Major Required (Core) Courses (Total # of courses required = 15)</i>		
<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
Business Leadership Certificate (required for all MBA candidates)		
MBA XXXX	Business Leadership Development	1.5
MBA XXXX	Emotional Intelligence for Leaders	1.5
MBA XXXX	Value Creation	1.5
MBA XXXX	Accounting for Business Decisions	1.5
MBA XXXX	Ethics & Corporate Social Responsibility	1.5
MBA XXXX MBA XXXX	Negotiations OR Special Topics for Leaders	1.5
MBA XXXX	Marketing Leadership	3.0
MBA XXXX	Strategic Management	1.5
MBA XXXX	Applied Integrative Project	1.5
Business Analytics Certificate (Option #1 for MBA completion)		
MBA XXXX	Data-Driven Decision Making	1.5
MBA XXXX	Statistics for Business Analytics	1.5
MBA XXXX	Marketing Analytics	3.0
MBA XXXX	Data Visualization for Business Decisions	3.0
MBA XXXX	Applied Business Analytics	3.0
Global Sustainability for Business Certificate (Option #2 for MBA completion)		
MBA XXXX	Organizational Change for Sustainability	1.5
MBA XXXX	Sustainability Reporting & Analysis	1.5
MBA XXXX	Responsible Global Leadership	3.0
MBA XXXX	Sustainable Business Practices	3.0
MBA XXXX	Special Topics in Sustainability	3.0
	Sub-total # Core Credits Required	27

Form A2: LOI Graduate Program Curriculum Outline (continued)		
<i>Elective Course Choices (Total courses required = 3 credits) (attach list of choices if needed)</i>		
Variable	Students may take any of the above courses not included in either the Business Leadership Certificate or the chosen certificate for completion of the degree.	3
MBA XXXX	Special Topics for Leaders (May be repeated for credit provided that the topic to be covered is different)	1.5
MBA XXXX	Negotiations (May be taken as an elective if not selected for completion of the Business Leadership Certificate)	1.5
CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING ELECTIVES		
Students may choose as an elective any MBA course not required in their chosen Certificates		
ACCT 0628	Fraud Examination (Elective)	3
ACCT 0630	Foundations in Ethics: Applications in Business & the CPA Profession (Elective)	3
ACCT 0631	Municipal & Fund Accounting (Elective)	3
MGMT 0632	Business Law for Accountants (Elective)	3
ACCT 0642	Managing Professionals in Client Service Organizations (Elective)	3
PADM 0600	Foundations of Public Administration (Elective)	3
PADM 0638	Introduction to Healthcare Systems (Elective)	3
PADM 0640	The Regional Economy of New England (Elective)	3
	Sub-total # Elective Credits Required	3
Curriculum Summary		
Total number of courses required for the degree		15
Total credit hours required for degree		30
Prerequisite, Concentration or Other Requirements:		
A bachelor's degree in business or equivalent knowledge of basic financial accounting, financial management, and microeconomics. Students without this background will be required to complete MBA Boot Camp.		



Proposed MBA

Business, Mathematics,
Computing, & Sustainability

BUSINESS LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATE (Required for all MBA Candidates)				TOTAL CREDITS
Business Leadership Development (1.5 credits)	Value Creation (1.5 credits)	Ethics & Corporate Social Responsibility (1.5 credits)	Marketing Leadership (3 credits)	12
Emotional Intelligence for Leaders (1.5 credits)	Accounting for Business Decisions (1.5 credits)	Choose one: • Negotiation • Special Topics for Leaders		

BUSINESS ANALYTICS				TOTAL CREDITS
Data-Driven Decision Making (1.5 credits)	Marketing Analytics (3 credits)	Data Visualization for Business Decisions (3 credits)	Applied Business Analytics (3 credits)	12
Statistics for Business Analytics (1.5 credits)				

GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR BUSINESS				TOTAL CREDITS
Organizational Change for Sustainability (1.5 credits)	Responsible Global Leadership (3 credits)	Sustainable Business Practices (3 Credits)	Special Topics in Sustainability (3 credits)	12
Sustainability Reporting & Analysis (1.5 credits)				

ADDITIONAL REQUIRED FOR MBA		TOTAL CREDITS	PATHWAYS TO WSU MBA
Elective (3 credits) Choose 3 credits from courses above or MSA courses or PADM courses	Capstone Course Strategic Management (1.5 credits) Applied Integrative Project: (1.5 credits) • Consulting project • Strategic analysis project • Study Abroad	6	<p>2 Certificates + 2 Courses = MBA 24 credits + 6 credits = 30 credits</p> <p>LEADERSHIP + BUSINESS ANALYTICS + ELECTIVE + CAPSTONE = MBA</p> <p>LEADERSHIP + GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY + ELECTIVE + CAPSTONE = MBA</p>

MBA Admission Requirements: A bachelor’s degree in business or equivalent knowledge of basic financial accounting, financial management and microeconomics. Students without this background will be required to complete MBA Boot Camp.

Form B: LOI Goals and Objectives

Goal	Measurable Objective	Strategy for Achievement	Timetable
Demonstrate advanced knowledge in areas such as business management, accounting, finance, marketing, and strategic planning.	Successful completion (B+ or better) of the courses in the Business Leadership Certificate	Faculty will ensure that key topics, models and tools for each functional business area are included in the relevant courses along with appropriate assignments and activities.	Data to be collected and analyzed annually
Develop critical thinking, decision-making, leadership and communication skills to drive organizational success and contribute to societal and environmental well-being.	Successful completion (B+ or better) of the Business Leadership Certificate Successful completion (B+ or better) of Applied Business Analytics or Sustainable Business Practices courses	Faculty will ensure that course topics, assignments, and activities introduce and reinforce skills in critical thinking, decision-making, leadership and communication.	Data to be collected and analyzed annually
Thrive in a diverse and inclusive community where individuals from different backgrounds can exchange ideas and perspectives.	Successful completion (B+ or better) of Business Leadership Development and Emotional Intelligence	Faculty will ensure that key topics, models and tools for diversity, inclusion, equity and social justice are addressed in the Business Leadership Development and Emotional Intelligence courses.	Data to be collected and analyzed annually
Develop the ethical mindset needed to lead with integrity in today's dynamic global business landscape.	Successful completion (B+ or better) of the Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility course	Faculty will ensure that key topics, models and tools for ethical decision making and corporate social responsibility are incorporated in the relevant courses.	Data to be collected and analyzed annually
Integrate knowledge and formulate strategies contribute meaningfully to	Successful completion (B+ or better) of Strategic Management	Faculty will ensure that key topics, models and tools for strategy formulation are	Data to be collected and analyzed annually

Goal	Measurable Objective	Strategy for Achievement	Timetable
improving businesses and society.	course and Applied Integrative Project course Responsible Global Leadership or Applied Business Analytics courses	incorporated in relevant courses and are applied in integrative course projects.	

Form C: LOI Program Enrollment

MBA Program Proposal
Form C: LOI Program Enrollment

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
New Full-Time	3	3	3	3	3
Continuing Full-Time		1	1	1	1
New Part-Time	25	26	27	28	29
Continuing Part-Time		19	20	20	21
MBA Full-Time Totals	3	4	4	4	4
MBA Part-Time Totals	25	45	47	48	50
Certificate Totals	4	5	6	7	8
MBA Totals	28	49	51	52	54

Enrollment Assumptions

Full-Time students should complete the program in one year (30 credits)
Certificate students should complete the certificate in one year (12 credits)

Enrollment is projected to grow at 3% per year

Part-time student retention is 75% of the previous year's enrollment
Full-time student retention is 33% of the previous year's enrollment

Form D: LOI Program Budget



Proposed MBA Program

One Time Start Up Costs		2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Cost Categories						
	Full Time Faculty (Salary & Fringe & Payroll Tax)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Day Faculty Teaching in DCGE (Salary & Payroll Tax)	\$ 73,759	\$ 76,341	\$ 79,013	\$ 81,778	\$ 84,641
	Part Time/Adjunct (Salary & Payroll Tax)	\$ 12,190	\$ 12,616	\$ 13,058	\$ 13,515	\$ 13,988
	TOTAL SALARY COSTS	\$ 85,949	\$ 88,957	\$ 92,071	\$ 95,293	\$ 98,629
Other Instructional & Administrative Costs						
	Overhead to DGCE @20% of Total Revenue	\$ 45,710	\$ 79,158	\$ 85,457	\$ 90,443	\$ 97,326
	Program Area Chair	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500
	Program Advisor	\$ 3,200	\$ 5,400	\$ 5,700	\$ 5,900	\$ 6,200
	Staff (half-time) (Admin II)	\$ 43,515	\$ 45,038	\$ 46,614	\$ 48,246	\$ 49,934
	Professional Development Webinars	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500
	Instructional Supplies	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ 300
	Office Supplies	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200
	Professional Travel	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500
\$ 5,000	Marketing	\$ 6,000	\$ 9,500	\$ 9,500	\$ 9,500	\$ 9,500
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 188,374	\$ 232,053	\$ 243,342	\$ 253,382	\$ 265,589

Institution: Westfield State University

Proposed Degree: MBA

Revenue					
Full-time MBA Tuition @ 21 credits/yr	\$ 26,334	\$ 36,204	\$ 37,296	\$ 38,388	\$ 39,564
Full-Time MBA Program Fees	\$ 2,400	\$ 3,200	\$ 3,200	\$ 3,200	\$ 3,200
Full-time MBA Revenue	\$ 28,734	\$ 39,404	\$ 40,496	\$ 41,588	\$ 42,764
Part-Time MBA Tuition @ 15 credits/yr	\$ 156,750	\$ 290,925	\$ 313,020	\$ 329,040	\$ 353,250
Part-Time MBA Program Fees	\$ 20,000	\$ 36,000	\$ 37,600	\$ 38,400	\$ 40,000
Part-time MBA Revenue	\$ 176,750	\$ 326,925	\$ 350,620	\$ 367,440	\$ 393,250
Certificate Tuition	\$ 20,664	\$ 26,460	\$ 32,568	\$ 38,988	\$ 45,816
Certificate Program Fees	\$ 2,400	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,600	\$ 4,200	\$ 4,800
Certificate Revenue	\$ 23,064	\$ 29,460	\$ 36,168	\$ 43,188	\$ 50,616
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 228,548	\$ 395,789	\$ 427,284	\$ 452,216	\$ 486,630
NET INCOME	<u>\$ 35,174</u>	<u>\$ 163,736</u>	<u>\$ 183,942</u>	<u>\$ 198,834</u>	<u>\$ 221,041</u>

Institution: Westfield State University

Proposed Degree: MBA

ASSUMPTIONS	
Annual Salary, Fringe & Taxes	3.50%
Fringe + Tax Rate	45.05%
Advising Pay/Student	\$ 100
Program Area Chair	\$ 2,500
Staff Salary	\$ 30,000
Program Fee/Term	\$ 200
Terms/MBA Student/Yr	4
Terms/Certificate Student/yr	3
Credit Hours/YR Full-time Student	21
Credit Hours/Yr Part-time Student	15

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Average Credits /year
Tuition Rates						
MBA per credit	\$ 418	\$ 431	\$ 444	\$ 457	\$ 471	21
Certificate per Credit	\$ 418	\$ 431	\$ 444	\$ 457	\$ 471	15

Institution: Westfield State University

Proposed Degree: MBA

SALARY CALCULATIONS		Salary per Credit	3 Credit Grad Course	Salary + Tax	Number of Faculty	First Year Cost
	Instructor	\$ 1,608	\$ 5,161	\$ 5,997	0	\$ -
	Sr Instructor	\$ 1,634	\$ 5,245	\$ 6,095	2	\$ 12,190
	Asst Prof	\$ 1,691	\$ 5,428	\$ 6,308	1.5	\$ 9,461
	Assoc Prof	\$ 1,778	\$ 5,707	\$ 6,631	5	\$ 33,156
	Prof	\$ 1,855	\$ 5,956	\$ 6,921	4.5	\$ 31,142
	TOTAL SALARY 2025					

Appendix 1

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MBA PROGRAMS IN REGION

Institution & Location Program Name	Total Credits	Delivery Format	Cost to Attend	Sample Curriculum
Westfield State University Westfield, MA Master of Business Administration	30	Online	\$11,940	Stackable Certificate Program with Certificates in Business Leadership, Business Analytics, Sustainability
Adelphi University Garden City, NY Master of Business Administration	36	Online	\$53,640	General MBA, Healthcare Management
American International College (AIC) Springfield, MA Master of Business Administration	36	Online	\$24,450	Traditional MBA curriculum
Assumption University Worcester, MA MBA Full-Time Management MBA in Healthcare Management MA in Organizational Leadership	36	In-Person for Full-Time Online for Part-Time	\$29,412	Concentrations: Business Analytics, Entrepreneurial Studies, Finance, Healthcare Management,
Bay Path University Longmeadow, MA Master of Business Administration	30	Online	\$25,650	Management, Cybersecurity, Data Analytics, Finance, Healthcare Management
Bentley University Waltham, MA Master in Business Analytics	30	In-Person	\$58,650	Managerial Statistics, Data Management & System Modeling, Time Series Analysis, Data Mining

Institution: Westfield State University

Proposed Degree: MBA

Institution & Location Program Name	Total Credits	Delivery Format	Cost to Attend	Sample Curriculum
Bridgewater State University Bridgewater, MA Master of Business Administration	30	In-Person & Online	\$15,067	Business Intelligence/ Analytics, Global Management Managing People and Organizations
Central Connecticut State University New Britain, CT Master of Business Administration	30	In-Person	\$25,140	Tracks in Business Analytics, Accounting, Finance, General Management, Supply Chain Management, Management, Marketing
Clark University Worcester, MA Master of Business Administration MBA in Accounting MBA in Finance	48	Online	\$42,900	Information Systems for Analytics, Responsible Management in a Global Economy, Data Driven Decision Making
College of Our Lady of the Elms Chicopee, MA Master of Business Administration	36	In-Person and Online	\$35,676	Accounting MBA, Financial Planning MBA, Healthcare Leadership MBA, Management MBA
Fitchburg State University Fitchburg, MA Master of Business Administration	30	Online	\$13,080	Accounting, Business Analytics Management, Healthcare Management, Human Resources Management
Framingham State University Framingham, MA Master of Business Administration	48	In-Person & Online	\$18,300	Concentration in Management or Biotechnology Operations
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) North Adams, MA Master in Business Administration	30	Hybrid & Online	\$15,510	Competing in Global Economies and Markets, Managing and Leading, Sustainability and Social Responsibility

Institution: Westfield State University

Proposed Degree: MBA

Institution & Location Program Name	Total Credits	Delivery Format	Cost to Attend	Sample Curriculum
Salem State University Salem, MA Master of Business Administration	36	In-Person & Online	\$20,326	Accounting Analysis for Decision Making, Legal and Ethical Environment, Financial Decision Making and Value Creation
University of Connecticut Hartford and Stamford, CT Master of Business Administration	42	In-Person & Online	\$46,200	Business Analytics, Business Ethics & Compliance, Finance, General Business, Management, Marketing, Supply Chain Management
University of Hartford Hartford, CT Master of Business Administration	36	Online	\$30,096	Business Analytics, Entrepreneurial Studies, Finance, Healthcare Management
University of Massachusetts Amherst Amherst, MA Master of Business Administration MS in Accounting MS in Business Analytics MS in Sports Management Master of Finance	45	In-Person & Online	\$42,132	Business Analytics, Healthcare Administration, Marketing, Entrepreneurship, Finance, Sports Management
Western New England University Springfield, MA Master of Business Administration	38	Online asynchronous & remote synchronous	\$36,000	Leadership, Accounting for Decision Makers, Organizational Behavior, Decision Modeling for Analytics



Board of Trustees

June 20, 2024

MOTION

The Academic Affairs committee recommends approval to the full Board:

To approve the Master of Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner.

Institution:

Proposed Degree:

**PHASE I: LETTER OF INTENT TEMPLATE
FOR BOARD VOTE ON APPROVAL PROCESS**

Review Guidelines Prior to Submitting Materials

<https://www.mass.edu/foradmin/academic/publicnewdegrees.asp>

Information should be typed directly into the boxes below, which will expand. Letter of Intent (LOI) document should be about five to six pages in addition to appendices. After the local approval process for the LOI has been completed, the President of the institution should submit this template and all required forms addressed to the Commissioner of Higher Education, and to the Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) of the Board of Higher Education (BHE).

Submissions are required to be in MS Word format. Please direct the completed to:

PublicProgramReview@dhe.mass.edu

Proposed Degree Title and Intent and Mission of the Program (200 words):

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner

Proposed CIP Code:

Chief Academic Officer (CAO) Name and Title: Linda Thompson DrPH, MPH, DNP (hc), RN, FAAN, President

CAO Phone Number: (413) 572-5201

CAO Email: president@westfield.ma.edu

Has the Chief Academic Officer reviewed this LOI? yes

Date LOI was approved by governing authority:

A. Alignment with Massachusetts Goals for Public Higher Education

The FY19 BHE Equity Statement (<https://www.mass.edu/strategic/equity.asp>) provides campuses with insight into the next iteration of the system-level plans.

1. How does the program address institutional gaps in opportunity and achievement? How does the program align with campus goals?

Institution:**Proposed Degree:**

The launch of a thoughtfully designed Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) program at Westfield State University can effectively address institutional gaps in opportunity and achievement while also aligning with campus goals in several ways. First, the program's structure includes 22 credits of required core curriculum for Nurse Practitioners followed by a required 26 credit specialty track in PMHNP. This fully online curriculum will allow for accessibility for working adult learners, and the flexibility to add additional specialty tracks to meet the institutional goals related to program growth and responding to area workforce needs.

a. Addressing Institutional Gaps:

This program actively promotes diversity and inclusion by recruiting and admitting a diverse cohort of students. It can aim to increase representation of underrepresented minority groups in the healthcare field, addressing gaps in opportunity and achievement for these populations. By offering this specialized PMHNP program, Westfield State can provide an accessible and affordable education option to students who aspire to become Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners. This broadens opportunities for students who might otherwise face barriers to advanced education due to geographical or financial constraints.

Additionally, the proposed program is a launching point for a flexibly accessible advanced nursing programming as it can be further tailored to meet the specific healthcare needs of the local community, especially in underserved areas. Graduates can fill gaps in healthcare services, improving access to care for marginalized and underserved populations. The initial NP track of Psychiatric Mental Health can specifically address gaps in mental healthcare services, which have been recognized at both the federal and state level as a health professional shortage within our geographical location. The addition of the proposed program will meet a significant need, particularly in addressing issues related to mental health disparities and achievement gaps.

b. Aligning with Campus Goals:

The addition of the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner program can enhance the overall academic excellence of Westfield State University. It aligns with the goal to offer high-quality, relevant, and competitive educational programs. The program encourages engagement with the local community through clinical placements and outreach efforts. This aligns with the campus goal of fostering community partnerships and contributing to the region's well-being. Launching the proposed PMHNP program aligns with broader campus and state goals related to healthcare workforce development. It can support state initiatives to address healthcare workforce shortages, enhance the quality of care, and improve health outcomes. The introduction of a PMHNP program encourages innovation and interprofessional collaboration. It aligns with goals related to expanding research, promoting cross-disciplinary cooperation, and preparing students to work in evolving healthcare environments. The PMHNP program can contribute to student success by offering future growth opportunities in specialty tracks to fulfill the need for in-demand career pathways. By helping students become highly skilled the PMHNP program at Westfield State can promote successful outcomes for its graduates.

Institution:

Proposed Degree:

2. What program or department supports and practices are in place to ensure that students persist and complete the certifications and degrees offered by the program?

The Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner program will reside in the Nursing Department which has demonstrated highly effective programs with the BSN and the RN to BSN bachelor completion program offered through DGCE. In addition, Westfield State University has various supports and practices in place to ensure that students persist and complete the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner program, including academic advising, student support services, clinical placement assistance, faculty mentorship, professional development opportunities, and collaboration and peer support.

The program will have dedicated academic advisors who work closely with students to develop personalized academic plans, track their progress, and provide guidance throughout their program. Academic advisors can help students navigate the curriculum, understand degree requirements, and make informed course selection and sequencing decisions.

The University has a range of student support services available to assist Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner students. These services include financial aid, writing assistance, career assistance, and technology. These resources can help students strengthen their academic skills and overcome challenges they may encounter during their program.

The program will have a dedicated team that assists students in securing clinical placements. They can help students identify suitable clinical sites, connect with preceptors, and navigate the logistics of arranging clinical rotations. This support is crucial for students to gain hands-on experience and meet the clinical requirements of their program.

Faculty members in the program will provide mentorship and guidance to students. They can offer academic and professional advice, support students in their research or capstone projects, and serve as role models in psychiatric mental health nursing. Faculty mentorship can contribute to students' academic and personal development, fostering a supportive learning environment.

The program will offer opportunities to help students build their skills and knowledge beyond the classroom. These may include workshops, conferences, seminars, or networking events where students can engage with experts in the field and stay up to date with advancements in psychiatric mental health nursing.

The program will foster collaboration among students and support a sense of community within the program to enhance student engagement and persistence. Group projects, study groups, and peer mentoring initiatives will provide opportunities for students to support and learn from one another, creating a supportive network that promotes academic success.

Finally, the nursing program engages in ongoing evaluation to assess the effectiveness of all programming, including curriculum, teaching methods, and support structures. This evaluation

Institution:

Proposed Degree:

process involves seeking feedback from students, alumni, and clinical partners to identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments to ensure the program meets the needs of students and aligns with industry standards. The program evaluation uses known standards such as the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education to guide its evaluation.

These supports and practices work together to create a nurturing and inclusive environment for students, and will continue in the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner program at Westfield State University. By providing comprehensive support, the University aims to increase student persistence and completion rates, ultimately preparing students for successful psychiatric mental health nursing careers.

3. Please describe relevant alliances and partnerships with PK-12, other institutions of higher education, and the employer community. If you have or plan to convene an advisory group for this proposed program, please explain. Describe how information from an advisory will be used to develop and refine the program.

Establishing solid alliances and partnerships is crucial for the success of the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Program at Westfield State University. Through the Nursing Program we have built a solid foundation of supports and will continue to build on this with the proposed program. We plan to engage with various stakeholders, including partnerships with middle and high schools, other higher education institutions, and employers. Additionally, we plan to engage an advisory board that reflects the community of interest to develop and revise the program.

We will collaborate with local primary and secondary schools to identify students interested in healthcare careers early on. Leveraging our existing healthcare career navigation program, we will offer resources, mentorship, and guidance to help students navigate their educational pathways toward becoming psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners.

Partnerships with institutions like Holyoke and Springfield Technical Community College will allow seamless transfer pathways for students interested in pursuing advanced degrees in nursing. We'll work together to align the curriculum, streamline admissions processes, and facilitate credit transfers to ensure a smooth transition for students building off of current collaborations such as our concurrent enrollment program with Holyoke Community College that allows students to begin taking courses toward Westfield's baccalaureate degree in nursing while in their associate degree nursing program. This existing program also includes a joint admission whereby students complete one application to be admitted to both programs, hence further streamlining the process and lifting the burden from the student.

We have strong partnerships with major medical facilities and other regional healthcare organizations. Through practice placement collaborations, our students access diverse clinical experiences that enrich their education and prepare them for real-world practice. By engaging with employers, we can tailor our program to meet the evolving needs of the healthcare industry and ensure that our graduates are well-prepared for employment opportunities. Our practice partners are searching for qualified

Institution:

Proposed Degree:

practitioners to fill vacancies and are imploring Westfield State to offer academic preparation pathways to help build the pipeline.

We will convene an advisory group of key stakeholders, including faculty members, healthcare professionals, representatives from partnering institutions, employers, and alumni. This group will provide valuable insights, feedback, and guidance throughout the development and refinement of the program. Information gathered from the advisory group will be instrumental in shaping the program curriculum, clinical experiences, and overall program structure. We'll use feedback from the advisory group to identify industry trends, emerging best practices, and areas for improvement. This iterative process will ensure that our program remains relevant, responsive to the community's needs, and aligned with industry standards.

By fostering strong partnerships and leveraging the expertise of our advisory group, we aim to develop a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner program that not only meets accreditation standards but also prepares highly competent and compassionate professionals to address the mental health needs of our communities.

4. If the proposed program is designed for students to enter an employment area of demonstrated need in the regional and/or statewide labor market, provide evidence including references to workforce development plans (e.g. MassHire Regional Blueprints, <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/view-your-regions-blueprint>), showing market need and employer engagement. If it is not directly labor market aligned, identify the career options related to the proposed program and explain how students will be made aware of them. Do not rely on Bureau of Labor Statistics projections in this section.

Launching the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner program at Westfield State University will play a crucial role in addressing the demonstrated workforce need expressed by MassHire, the Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint, and the Massachusetts Health Policy Commission's goals and initiatives. An explanation for how these programs would support the need for additional Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners is as follows.

The Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner programs offered by Westfield provide a solution to addressing workforce shortages (MassHire, 2020). MassHire and regional labor market data have identified a shortage of Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners (MassHire, 2020). Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners are prepared to address today's healthcare challenges (MassHire, 2020). On January 1, 2021, Massachusetts became the 23rd state to enact full practice authority for Nurse Practitioners (Massachusetts Legislature, 2021), keenly positioning them to take the lead in providing a complete and integrative approach to caring for the population. The Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint highlights healthcare as a growth sector with specific demands for nurses (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 2024). Launching these programs aligns with the region's economic development goals such as expanding access to care (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 2024).

The Massachusetts Health Policy Commission aims to improve access to healthcare services, especially in underserved areas (Massachusetts Health Policy Commission, 2020). PMHNPs can

Institution:**Proposed Degree:**

address the growing mental health needs of the population, contributing to the commission's goals of enhancing mental health services statewide (Massachusetts Health Policy Commission, 2020). The Massachusetts Health Policy Commission has identified that in contrast to a slow growth in the supply of primary care physicians in recent years, the number of PMHNPs has increased rapidly and is expected to continue to increase nationally and in Massachusetts (Massachusetts Health Policy Commission, 2020). Further, the Commission also states that PMHNPs have the potential to fill gaps in access to care, often working in underserved areas and with lower income populations (Massachusetts Health Policy Commission, 2020). By educating PMHNPs, Westfield State can help meet these objectives, supporting statewide policy goals (Massachusetts Health Policy Commission, 2020).

Nurse Practitioners, as a general discipline, enter specialty areas and receive specialized training that directly aligns with the unique healthcare needs of their respective fields (American Association of Nurse Practitioners, 2021). This targeted education ensures that graduates are well-prepared to address specific healthcare challenges and provide high-quality care in their areas of expertise (American Association of Nurse Practitioners, 2021). This proposal is specializing in Psychiatric Mental Health. As stated above, the creation of this inaugural PMHNP program will set the foundation for building additional tracks to meet the healthcare needs outlined in the Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint (2024).

Westfield State has established partnerships with local healthcare facilities, where a demand for PMHNP services exists. These partnerships provide students with practical experience and enhance their readiness for employment in the local workforce (Westfield State University, 2023). In addition, these partners have asked Westfield State University to expand its capacity to develop the nursing pipeline and produce practitioners ready to fill workforce gaps (Westfield State University, 2023). Westfield has a long-standing reputation for working as an interprofessional partner and fostering this value in our students (Westfield State University, 2023). The PMHNP program will emphasize interprofessional collaboration, addressing the need for healthcare providers who can work effectively in team-based care models, which is a priority in modern healthcare delivery (Westfield State University, 2023). As Westfield State currently does so for students in our pre-licensed and baccalaureate degree completion programs, we can commit to tracking the outcomes of PMHNP graduates, demonstrating their contributions to the healthcare workforce and patient outcomes (Westfield State University, 2023). This data can further support the value of these programs in meeting regional and state needs.

In conclusion, launching a PMHNP program at Westfield State University is not only a strategic response to the workforce needs identified by MassHire, the Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint, and the Massachusetts Health Policy Commission but also a way to fulfill the University's role in supporting the health and well-being of its community and the broader region. These programs can produce highly skilled Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners who can bridge gaps in primary care and mental health services, improving healthcare access and outcomes in line with regional and state goals.

Institution:**Proposed Degree:**

American Association of Nurse Practitioners. (2021). Nurse practitioner facts.
<https://www.aapmhnp.org/about/all-about-PMHNPs/PMHNP-fact-sheet>

Massachusetts Health Policy Commission. (2020). Massachusetts Health Policy Commission 2020 annual report. <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-health-policy-commission-2020-annual-report/download>

Massachusetts Legislature. (2021). H.2451: An Act to remove barriers to care for mental health.
<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/H2451>

MassHire. (2024). Pioneer Valley labor market blueprint.
<https://www.masshirefhwb.org/home/pioneer-valley-labor-market-blueprint-2024-2025-final-final-december-2023-mdcs/>

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. (2019). Pioneer Valley labor market blueprint.
https://www.pvpc.org/sites/default/files/Mid-Pioneer-Valley-Labor-Market-Blueprint_3.pdf

Westfield State University. (2021). Nursing partnerships.
<https://www.westfield.ma.edu/academics/academic-departments/nursing/nursing-partnerships>

Explain all relevant content that has been sourced using the internet. Use the full APA citation including retrieval date and the exact url where the content was obtained [e.g. Last, First. M. (Year, Month Date Published). Article title. Retrieved from URL ...]. Do not rely on a hyperlink reference to information and data used in this section. The application serves as a permanent record. If the institution has commissioned market research regarding the proposed program, please attach a digital copy of the report(s) on which you relied to draw your conclusions and design your program. DHE utilizes Burning Glass to validate data.

5. Are there existing programs at other institutions (public and independent) in your region that offer a similar degree? If so, compare and contrast them with the proposed program.

The following table provides a comparison of other programs that offer the psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner degree pathway.

School	Program Type	Tuition per Credit	Program Length (years)
University of Massachusetts Amherst	Online	\$750	2.5
MGH Institute of Health Professions	On-ground	\$1414	2
Boston College	On-ground	\$1496	2.5
Regis College	Online/On-ground	\$1310	3
Northeastern University	Online/On-ground	\$1716	2.5
Simmons University	Online	\$1110	2.5

Institution:**Proposed Degree:**

University of Massachusetts Boston	Online/On-ground	\$750	3
Westfield State University	Online	\$600	2-3

Westfield State University's program is necessary to address the specific workforce needs in the Pioneer Valley and western Massachusetts. Training Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners, the program helps fulfill the regional demand for mental health care professionals, particularly in light of the identified gaps in mental health care highlighted by the Massachusetts Health Policy Commission. Westfield State University's program is in Western Massachusetts, allowing students to gain local perspectives and experiences relevant to the region's healthcare landscape. Many, but not all, PMHNP programs offer an online option. With the knowledge that online programs offer flexibility for working professionals and having experience in offering distance education currently with WSUs RN to BSN completion program, we are confident that this delivery method would offer a flexible alternative for students.

Westfield State University's program is designed to align with the University's mission, goals, and resources, including offering high quality education at a reasonable price. Tuition costs range among Massachusetts PMHNP programs from \$750 to over \$1700 per credit. WSU's cost per credit will be \$600, which will provide an affordable option for students.

The program will leverage the institution's existing academic and clinical partnerships, faculty expertise, and support services to provide a comprehensive and high-quality educational experience for students pursuing a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner degree. Being a part of Westfield State University allows students in the program to access interprofessional collaboration opportunities with other healthcare programs and disciplines. Collaboration with faculty and students from related fields, such as social work, counseling, and psychology, will enhance students' understanding of integrated care models and prepare them to work effectively in interprofessional teams.

Westfield State University's PMHNP program is necessary to address the workforce needs, local community focus, and alignment with the University's resources and mission. The duration of the PMHNP programs in Massachusetts ranges from 2 to 3 years. This timeframe is optimal for balancing the rigorous and comprehensive curriculum with the demands faced by most working adults. Thus, in a program designed for adult learners with competing priorities, Westfield State University will add to the current workforce by producing well-equipped graduates to meet the specific challenges and provide quality care in the region.

6. Has the proposed program been planned to include any significant digital, experiential, competency-based or other innovative approaches? Please explain and provide examples.

The PMHNP program at Westfield State University has been meticulously designed to incorporate innovative approaches that align with the updated 2021 AACN Competency-Based Education (CBE) model. Recognizing the evolving landscape of healthcare and the increasing demand for competent psychiatric nursing professionals, our program integrates digital, experiential, and competency-based

Institution:**Proposed Degree:**

learning methods to ensure that graduates are well-prepared to meet the challenges of modern psychiatric healthcare delivery.

A cornerstone of our program lies in the seamless integration of cutting-edge digital technologies to elevate the learning journey. At Westfield State, we take pride in our state-of-the-art simulation center, methodically designed to provide students with unparalleled educational experiences. This facility harnesses a myriad of innovative technologies, many of which offer remote accessibility, ensuring flexibility and accessibility for all learners. To ensure the highest standards of simulation-based education, we are fortunate to have a dedicated full-time Director of Simulation, who, with her team, is responsible for overseeing all aspects of learning within this dynamic environment. Leveraging this expertise, we extend comprehensive support to faculty and students enrolled in the PMHNP program.

Through the strategic utilization of online learning platforms, immersive virtual simulations, and advanced telehealth technologies, our students are empowered to actively engage in interactive learning experiences. These dynamic digital resources not only complement traditional classroom instruction but also immerse students in lifelike clinical scenarios, mirroring the challenges and complexities they will encounter in their future roles as PMHNPs. By seamlessly blending theoretical knowledge with hands-on practical skills in a simulated clinical setting, we equip our students with the confidence and competence necessary to excel in the ever-evolving field of psychiatric nursing.

As a competency-based program, experiential learning is at the core of the PMHNP program's curriculum, providing students with hands-on clinical experiences that are essential for competency development and skill refinement. From practicum placements in diverse psychiatric settings to immersive case studies and interdisciplinary collaborations, students gain practical exposure to a wide range of mental health conditions and treatment modalities. Additionally, the program offers experiential opportunities for interprofessional education and collaborative practice, fostering a holistic understanding of patient care within a multidisciplinary context.

In alignment with the AACN CBE model, our program is focused on competency attainment, including the acquisition and demonstration of essential knowledge, skills, and abilities required for psychiatric nursing practice. Competency-based assessments will be used to evaluate student performance and progress throughout the program, ensuring that graduates are proficient in conducting comprehensive psychiatric assessments, formulating evidence-based treatment plans, and establishing therapeutic relationships with clients and interdisciplinary teams.

Westfield State University is committed to providing a dynamic and innovative learning environment that prepares PMHNP graduates to excel as psychiatric nursing leaders in an ever-changing healthcare landscape. By incorporating digital technologies, experiential learning opportunities, and competency-based approaches, our program equips students with the skills and competencies needed to deliver high-quality psychiatric care and improve outcomes for individuals with mental health needs.

B. Alignment with Campus Strategic Plan and Mission

Institution:

Proposed Degree:

1. Describe why the proposed program is a priority, and how it supports the campus's approved strategic plan, in the context of the institution's mission.

The proposed Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner program is a priority and supports Westfield State University's approved strategic plan in multiple ways, aligning with the institution's mission as a public University offering accessible quality undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal arts, sciences, and professional studies.

The PMHNP program contributes to Westfield State University's commitment to providing accessible quality programs. By offering the PMHNP program, the University expands its offerings to address the growing demand for mental health professionals. This program enables students to gain the necessary knowledge, skills, and character to serve as responsible leaders in the nursing field. Furthermore, with the launch of the PMHNP program, the opportunity for expansion to additional specialty tracks exists to further meet the demand for responsive educational programs.

The program enhances student engagement and success by offering a focused and relevant academic pathway. It provides students with opportunities for hands-on clinical experiences, research projects, and interprofessional collaboration, fostering active learning and engagement. By preparing students to address the health needs of the community, the program supports their success and helps them develop as competent and compassionate professionals.

The PMHNP program contributes to the economic, social, and cultural growth of the northeast region. Mental and general health care is an essential component of overall well-being and community development. By producing highly skilled practitioners, the program addresses the region's mental health workforce needs, improves access to care, and positively impacts the economic and social fabric of the community.

The program aligns with Westfield State University's mission of developing responsible leaders and engaged citizens. As PMHNPs graduates assume leadership roles in the delivery of health care, advocating for equitable access to services, and promoting holistic approaches to well-being. By instilling values of social responsibility, ethical practice, and community engagement, the program prepares graduates to be active contributors to society and engaged citizens in the northeast region.

In summary, the proposed PMHNP program at Westfield State University is a priority that supports the institution's mission by providing accessible quality programs, promoting student engagement and success, contributing to economic and social growth, and developing responsible leaders and engaged citizens. The program aligns with the University's commitment to education, community service, and the overall well-being of the northeast region.

2. List the overall goals and learning objectives of the program and describe the strategy for achieving each goal. Use the **LOI Program Goals and Objectives** table in addition to any narrative comments.

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The PMHNP program at Westfield State University has been meticulously crafted to align with the competencies outlined by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF), and the Nurse of the Future (NOF). Each program goal, measurable objective, and strategy for achievement has been intentionally designed to ensure alignment with these competencies. Further, each course objective is directly linked to these competencies ensuring that all required competencies are addressed. Through a curriculum emphasizing comprehensive psychiatric assessments, evidence-based treatment planning, and cultural humility, students develop the skills and attributes necessary to excel as advanced practice psychiatric mental health nurses. Strategies such as simulation-based learning, clinical rotations in diverse settings, and advocacy initiatives support the development of clinical competence, therapeutic communication, and leadership skills, thus preparing graduates to meet the evolving demands of healthcare while advancing the mental health needs of individuals, families, and communities.

C. Alignment with Operational and Financial Objectives of the Institution

1. Provide enrollment projections for the first five years of the program using the Program Enrollment form (Form C), Describe below any anticipated impact that the program may have on enrollment in other programs.

As outlined in Form C, enrollment projections show an additional 58 students by year 5. As the healthcare industry works toward building integrated healthcare teams to reduce overall health costs while increasing health outcomes, the graduates from the WSU PMHNP program will serve this workforce gap and bring an area of expertise that is lacking among healthcare teams.

With respect to the impact the program may have on other areas of enrollment, the required degree to enter the PMHNP program is a BSN. As we attract students interested in specialized mental health training, the program is expected to raise the overall visibility and appeal of WSU's healthcare and nursing programs. This heightened interest may lead to increased enrollment in related fields, such as the undergraduate nursing and RN to BSN degree completion programs, thus enhancing the university's reputation as a leader in comprehensive nursing and behavioral healthcare education. Additionally, the interdisciplinary nature of the PMHNP program will encourage collaboration and enrollment in complementary programs, such as psychology, social work, physician assistant, and public health.

2. Describe the resources that the program will require (additional faculty and/or staff, space and equipment, on-line infrastructure, startup and maintenance of the program). Please include a narrative or financial statement outlining the anticipated net impact of the program on the overall financial resources of the institution. Include five years of future projections of revenue and expense using the LOI Budget form (**Form D**).

As noted in Form D, the accreditation standards for the new PMHNP program at WSU will require specific resources to ensure its success. This includes the recruitment of a program director, a full-

Institution:

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time faculty member, clinical coordinator, and part-time faculty with expertise in psychiatric mental health, as well as administrative staff to support program operations. A robust online infrastructure will be crucial for delivering remote instruction and virtual simulations, necessitating reliable IT support and resources for faculty to develop high-quality online content. Initial funding will be needed for curriculum development, marketing, and recruitment, along with ongoing maintenance to support continuous faculty development, course material updates, and regular program assessments to meet accreditation standards and industry needs. Finally, funds need to be allocated to adequately market the PMHNP program to online adult learners. Westfield State University is dedicated to securing these resources to ensure the successful implementation and sustainability of the PMHNP program.

3. Complete the LOI Curriculum Outline form (Form A) with course titles and credits.

Form A describes the 48 credit program and delineates the 22 credits of core curriculum, and the 26 credits of the specialty track of PMHNP. Through the thoughtful design, additional specialty tracks can be added, i.e., family nurse practitioner, etc.

4. Complete the LOI Program Goals and Objective form (Form B).

Form B outlines the program goals and objectives that align with the accreditation standards set forth by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

Comments and Response

The submitted LOI will be reviewed for completeness by staff. This process typically occurs within 15 business days from when it is received. Once deemed complete, the LOI is circulated by the Deputy Commissioner of Academic Affairs and Student Success (the Deputy), to the AAC and SPC members of the BHE, public campus CAO's, and to the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Massachusetts (AICUM) representatives for relevant comments.

Formal commentary to an LOI must come from an institution's President, be addressed to the Commissioner of Higher Education, with a cc to the Deputy, and received within 20 business days from the date the LOI is circulated.

All commentary is sent to the community colleges and state University institution, where the proposed program LOI originated. University of Massachusetts commentary is sent to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, and International Relations, who is responsible to forward the information to the specific campus

Responses to any commentary are required. Responses must come from the LOI institution President and be addressed to the Commissioner of Higher Education, with a cc to the Deputy

Institution:

Proposed Degree:

and submitted to awilliams@dhe.mass.edu. This written response to commentary must be received within 20 business days from the date it is sent to the President.

Institution:

Proposed Degree:

A Note About Timelines

Program review is a serve-and-return process, which means that there are several communications back and forth between the institution and DHE staff as the submission is being reviewed.

A campus should expect that an LOI (or proposal application) template submitted for staff validation and review for completion will be subject to a **15-business-day period of review**. Following this time frame the campus can expect staff to provide information regarding any further data that are needed for the LOI to be deemed complete. This communication **resets the 15-business-day time frame**. Responsibility rests with the campus to provide data in a timely manner, this may be important to a campus working within a targeted timeline for program development and launch. Once the campus has responded to staff by submitting the additional data, **the 15-business-day** clock begins anew.

After an LOI is validated and deemed complete it is circulated by the Deputy to the AAC and SPC, public campus CAO's and to AICUM representatives for commentary (as described above). The **comment period is open for 20 business days**. At the end of this time frame, all comments are reviewed by staff and sent to the LOI institution's CAO, who then has **20 business days** to submit a written response to the Deputy. Comments and responses are included in the motion brought forward for BHE action.

An LOI is brought forward either within **20 business days** of receiving the institution's response or at the next scheduled AAC meeting.

Following AAC action, the next step of the process is submission of the application proposal, which must be submitted **within two years** of the BHE action on the LOI for either a Fast Track or Standard process review.

A proposed program application template is validated and reviewed for completion **within 20 business days** of receipt. As noted above, the campus can expect staff to provide information regarding any further data that are needed for the proposal to be deemed complete. As previously noted, this communication **resets the time frame**. Once the campus has responded by submitting the additional data, **the 15-business-day** clock begins anew. Once validated and deemed complete, Fast Track proposals are forwarded to the Commissioner with a recommendation for action **within 30 business days**. The 30-business day timetable begins on the date DHE staff notify the campus that the proposal is deemed complete. BHE follows the guidelines on all proposal applications in accordance with either the Fast Track or the Standard Process.

Institution: Westfield State University

Proposed Degree: Master of Science in Nursing

ATTACHMENTS:

Form A	LOI Curriculum Outline
Form B	LOI Goals and Objectives
Form C	LOI Enrollment Projections
Form D	LOI Budget

Form A1: LOI Undergraduate Program Curriculum Outline

(Insert additional rows as necessary)

<i>Major Required (Core) Course</i>		
<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
NURSXXXX	Advanced Pathophysiology	3
NURSXXXX	Advances Health Assessment Skills Across the Lifespan	4
NURSXXXX	Theoretical Basis for Advanced Nursing Practice	3
NURSXXXX	Advanced Pharmacology	3
NURSXXXX	Evidence Based Strategies to Improve Health	3
NURSXXXX	The NP role in Healthcare Policy	3
NURSXXXX	The NP Role in Healthcare Leadership and Innovation	3
	Sub-total # Core Credits Required	22
<i>PMHNP Track Required Courses</i>		
NURSXXXX	PMHNP: Psych Assessment & Differential Diagnosis	3
NURSXXXX	PMHNP: Neuro-Psychopharmacology	3
NURSXXXX	PMHNP: Integrated Treatment for Adults/Older Adults	3
NURSXXXX	PMHNP: Practicum I	3
NURSXXXX	PMHNP: Integrated Treatment for Child/Adol/Family	2
NURSXXXX	PMHNP: Practicum II	6
NURSXXXX	PMHNP: Practicum III	6
	Sub-total # Elective Credits Required	26
<i>Curriculum Summary</i>		
Total number of courses required for the degree		14
Total credit hours required for degree		48
<i>Prerequisite, Concentration or Other Requirements:</i> BSN degree, RN license, minimum GPA 3.0, Resume, Personal statement, Two letters of recommendation		

Form B: LOI Goals and Objectives

Program Goals	Measurable Objectives	Strategy for Achievement	Timetable
1. Participants will be proficient in conducting comprehensive psychiatric assessments, formulating differential diagnoses, and developing evidence-based treatment plans, including pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions.	- Demonstrate competency in conducting psychiatric assessments, formulating differential diagnoses, and developing treatment plans.	1. Offer simulation and standardized patient encounters to practice assessment and diagnostic skills in controlled environments.	Throughout program
	- Achieve proficiency in selecting and implementing evidence-based pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions.	2. Provide access to case studies, clinical guidelines, and practice expert-led workshops on treatment planning and intervention selection.	Throughout program
2. Participants will demonstrate skill in integrating current research evidence, best practices, and clinical expertise to provide high-quality, evidence-based care to diverse populations with psychiatric and mental health needs.	- Incorporate current research evidence and best practices into clinical decision-making and patient care.	1. Offer courses that integrate evidence-based practice, research methodologies, and critical appraisal of literature.	Program year 1
	- Demonstrate proficiency in applying evidence-based interventions to address the unique needs of diverse patient populations.	2. Facilitate clinical rotations in diverse settings to provide exposure to various patient populations and their specific needs.	Program year 2/3
3. Participants will be adept at establishing and maintaining therapeutic relationships with clients, families, and interdisciplinary teams to promote collaborative care and positive treatment outcomes.	- Develop skills in building rapport, active listening, and empathetic communication with clients and their families.	1. Provide role-playing exercises, communication workshops, and interpersonal skills training to enhance therapeutic relationship-building.	Program year 1
	- Collaborate effectively with interdisciplinary teams to	2. Encourage participation in interdisciplinary case conferences, team-based	Throughout program

	coordinate care and optimize treatment outcomes.	projects, and collaborative care planning activities.	
4. Participants will demonstrate cultural humility in providing culturally sensitive care to individuals from diverse backgrounds, recognizing the impact of culture, ethnicity, and socio-economic factors on mental health.	- Acquire knowledge and understanding of diverse cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and practices related to mental health.	1. Integrate cultural competence training and experiential learning activities into the curriculum.	Program year 1
	- Demonstrate cultural humility through respectful engagement, active listening, and sensitivity to cultural nuances in clinical practice.	2. Provide opportunities for immersive experiences in culturally diverse communities and reflective exercises on personal biases and assumptions.	Program year 2/3
5. Participants will adhere to ethical principles and legal standards governing psychiatric and mental health practice, including confidentiality, informed consent, and professional boundaries.	- Demonstrate understanding of ethical principles, legal standards, and regulatory requirements in psychiatric nursing practice.	1. Offer courses, workshops, and case studies focusing on ethical decision-making, legal issues, and professional standards.	Throughout the program
	- Practice within the scope of legal and ethical guidelines, ensuring confidentiality, informed consent, and maintenance of professional boundaries.	2. Provide opportunities for ethical dilemma discussions, role-playing exercises, and shadowing experiences with experienced practitioners.	Program year 2/3
6. Participants will demonstrate advocacy for the mental health needs of individuals, families, and communities, and demonstrate leadership in promoting mental health awareness, reducing stigma, and advancing mental health policy.	- Engage in advocacy efforts to raise awareness of mental health issues, reduce stigma, and promote access to mental health services.	1. Facilitate participation in community outreach programs, mental health awareness campaigns, and advocacy initiatives.	Program year 1
	- Demonstrate leadership in advocating for policy changes that address systemic barriers to mental health care and support	2. Encourage involvement in professional organizations, policy forums, and legislative advocacy efforts.	Throughout the program

	mental health initiatives at local and national levels.		
7. Engage in continuous professional development, lifelong learning, and scholarly activities to stay abreast of advances in psychiatric and mental health nursing practice, research, and education.	- Participate in ongoing professional development activities, including conferences, workshops, and continuing education courses.	1. Provide access to resources such as journals, online databases, and professional development opportunities.	Throughout the program
	- Contribute to scholarly activities such as research projects, publications, presentations, and participation in academic conferences.	2. Encourage mentorship relationships with faculty members, collaboration on research projects, and scholarly dissemination of findings.	Program year 2/3

Form C: LOI Program Enrollment

	Year 1 2025	Year 2 2026	Year 3 2027	Year 4 2028	Year 5 2029
New Full-Time	10	11	12	13	13
Continuing Full-Time		9	10	11	11
New Part-Time	10	11	12	13	13
Continuing Part-Time Yr. 2		9	10	11	11
Continuing Part-Time Yr. 3			9	10	10
PHMHNP Full-Time Totals	10	20	22	24	24
PHMHNP Part-Time Totals	10	20	31	34	34
Totals	20	40	53	58	58

Enrollment Assumptions

- Full-Time students can complete the program in two years (48 credits; Year 1 = 22, Yr. 2 = 26)
- Part-Time students can complete the program in three years (48 credits; Year 1 = 16, Yr. 2 = 14, Yr. 3 = 18)
- Enrollment is projected to grow between 1-2% per year to account for any melt and to stabilize growth.
- Student retention is projected at a 1-2% loss per year based on retention rates in the nursing and RN to BSN program and offset by growth projections.

Form D: LOI Program Budget

<i>One Time/ Start Up Costs</i>		Annual Enrollment				
<i>Cost Categories</i>	Year 1 (Start Up)	Year 2 2025	Year 3 2026	Year 4 2027	Year 5 2028	
Full Time Faculty (Salary & Fringe)	174,000	323,350	333,500	343,505	368,310	
Part Time/Adjunct Faculty (Salary & Fringe) 18cr/yr		33,600	35,280	37,044	38,896	
Clinical Coordinator (Salary & Fringe)		108,825	112,090	115,452	118,916	
Admin Support (PT) (Salary & Fringe)		57,200	58,916	60,683	63,503	
General Administrative Costs	1,500					
Instructional Materials, Library Acquisitions						
Facilities/Space/Equipmen t						
Field & Clinical Resources						
Marketing		17,103	18,522	20,060	21,725	
Other (Specify) Accreditation Fees	4,000	10,985	3,710	3,770	3,820	
National Assoc of NP	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	
TOTAL	(183,500)	(555,063)	(566,018)	(584,514)	(619,170)	
<i>One Time/Start-Up Support</i>		Annual Income				
<i>Revenue Sources</i>	Year 1 (Start Up)	Year 2 2025	Year 3 2026	Year 4 2027	Year 5 2028	
Grants						
Tuition	0	228,000	936,000	1,526,400	1,670,400	
Fees						
Departmental						

Institution: Westfield State University

Proposed Degree: Master of Science in Nursing

	Reallocated Funds					
	Other (specify)					
	TOTALS	(183,500)	(327,063)	369,982	941,886	1,051,230
Less 20% Overhead		36,700	65,412	73,996	188,377	210,246
Net Revenue/Loss		(220,200)	(392,475)	295,986	753,509	840,984