



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Student Success and Learning Committee

February 19, 2026, 12:00 p.m.

Minutes

President's Boardroom, Horace Mann Building

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Committee Chair Chris Montemayor, Vice Chair Barney Garcia, Secretary Michael O'Rourke, Trustee Theresa Jasmin, Trustee William Reichelt, Trustee Gloria Williams, and Board Chair Ali Salehi, ex-officio member.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Trustee Melissa Alvarado

Also present and participating are Westfield State University President, Dr. Linda Thompson; Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. William Salka; and Director of Athletics, Richard Lenfest.

Committee Chair Montemayor called the meeting to order at 12:14 p.m. and a roll call was taken of the committee members participating as listed above. It was announced that the meeting was being livestreamed and recorded.

MOTION made by Trustee O'Rourke and seconded by Trustee Garcia to approve the Academic Affairs Committee minutes of the December 18, 2025 meeting. There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE**, motion passed. Trustees Theresa Jasmin and Gloria Williams abstaining from the vote.

MOTION made by Trustee Queenin and seconded by Trustee Garcia to approve the Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee minutes of the December 18, 2025 meeting. There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE**, motion passed. Trustees Theresa Jasmin and Gloria Williams abstaining from the vote.

Success Grant – Spring 2026 Plan

- New restrictions:
 - 80% of the money must be spent on new personnel, primarily success coaches.
 - Funds must support "at risk students," defined as Pell or Mass grant eligible students.

Assistant Vice President for Educational Excellence and Retention

- Position expanded from Assistant Provost to Assistant Vice President.

- Applicants can now have experience in student support from student affairs or academic affairs. To broaden the pool of qualified applicants.
- Responsibilities generally the same as the previous Assistant Provost position.

Reorganization of Academic Student Support Offices

- Academic student support offices are now relocated in Parenzo.
 - Easier for students to access and become aware of services.
 - Example: Advisor can take a student directly to the tutoring center.
- Offices divided into two groups: opportunity programs and programs open to all students.

Opportunity Programs

- Deal with distinct populations.
- Examples:
 - Banacos Center: Provides accessibility services (accommodation for students with disabilities) and the learning disabilities program (LDP).
 - Accessibility services are understaffed and under-resourced.
 - LEAD Scholars/LEAD Program (formerly Urban Ed program): Being reworked to better serve at-risk students.
 - TRIO program: Continues to support its group of students.

Programs Open to All Students

- Any student can access these programs.
- Examples:
 - Academic Advising and Transfer Transition Office:
 - Implemented dual advising program: First and second-year students have both a faculty advisor and a professional advisor.
 - Professional advisors help students understand WISE (general education program) and pick their schedules.
 - Course Achievement Center (formerly Care Center):
 - Will be the primary focus for success money.
 - Services target at-risk students but are available to all students.
 - Success coaches primarily work with the at-risk cohort but will assist any student.
 - Aims to boost first and second-year retention rates.
 - Includes tutoring program, strengthened with professional tutors.

First-Year Success Measures

- Fall to spring retention:
 - Trending upwards, with almost 90% of first-time, full-time students returning in the current spring.
- Academic warning rates:
 - 16-17% of first-year students end up on academic warning after their first semester (GPA below 2.0).
 - This is a concern and needs to be addressed.
 - There is a narrow window to catch these students before the end of the fall semester.

First Year Journey Course (FYJ)

- Every first-year student is expected to take this course in the fall.
- A high percentage of students did not successfully complete the course (DWF) in the last two fall semesters: 22% and 23%.

- The speaker states that this number is too high, especially since the course is meant to introduce students to college.
- Uneven teaching methods by different faculty members is one of the issues.
 - Faculty development opportunities are being implemented to address this.
 - There are talks about incorporating more college survival skills into the course.
- Majority of students who didn't successfully complete the course had a high school GPA in the bottom two bands, with the largest number being 2.5.

Solutions

- Huron data will be used to model the likelihood of student success for incoming students.
 - Students will be divided into three categories: low risk, medium risk, and high risk.
 - The course achievement team and advising team will focus on high-risk students with intrusive intervention.
- Pell grant students in the high-risk group will be provided a stipend if they meet with their success coach monthly and participate in workshops.
 - The stipend acts as an incentive to take advantage of available support.
- Reorganization of academic affairs student support offices will continue over the summer.

Faculty Development and Support

- Faculty are free to do what they want with their courses. Professional development will be provided to better inform faculty teaching the FYJ course about the course's intended purpose and to bring uniformity.
- The University received a grant from the Davis Educational Foundation to provide development for faculty, including those teaching FYJ.

Student Support and GPA

- The culture at Westfield is to encourage students to withdraw from courses, even late in the semester, which affects their progress towards graduation.
- Success money is being used to pay for students to take summer courses to catch up.
- Success coaches provide wraparound support to address individual student struggles.

Athletics Report

- Athletics is the "front porch of the University."

Academics

- Men's ice hockey had the highest team GPA last semester with a 3.78.
- There were 30 student athletes with GPAs over 4.0, and 16 of them have maintained that throughout their careers.

Athletic Team Success in the Fall

- Three championships were won in the fall: women's cross country, field hockey, and women's soccer.
- Westfield State is currently in second place in the Smith Cup.

Major Awards

- 33 student athletes were all-conference across seven sports.
- Coach Berg Harris and Coach Brown were named coach of the year in the MassCap.

Winter Success

- Men's basketball won the regular season title and clinched the number one seed.
- Coach Sutter surpassed 400 wins and is the winningest coach in MassCap history for men's basketball.

- Sophomore Kenny Rogers broke a 56-year record by scoring 52 points against Bridgewater.
- Two first-year students in swimming and diving broke school records: Autumn Sutherland (from Cedar Hills, Utah) in the 50 fly and Isabella Zeppa from Monson in the 50 freestyle.
- Men's ice hockey won their 15th game, the most since the reestablishment of varsity ice hockey in 2008.
- Women's track and field won the championship, and Eliza Lee is ranked 15th in the nation in the long jump.

Sports Medicine/Athletic Training

- Approximately 50 student athletes go in for rehab daily.
- The athletic department utilizes bachelor's and master's program students for practical experience.

Nutrition

- Fueling stations are available every Wednesday, sponsored by Westfield Bank, providing healthy snacks for student athletes.
- The goal is to ensure student athletes have access to proper nutrition.

Performance/Strength and Conditioning

- The strength and conditioning program is popular among student athletes.
- The program uses software to measure analytics. The goal is to reduce injuries, especially season-ending injuries, by working with movement science and athletic training.

Mental Health

- Mental health is recognized as extremely important.
- Westfield State partners with Springfield College for athletic counselors to meet with teams regularly.
- Morgan's message is a suicide prevention program for student athletes as well.

Athletics Community Success

- 100% of teams are required to be involved in community engagement.
- Heavily involved with the Special Olympics.
- Baseball team participated with General Counsel Melinda Phelps in the Miracle Meet.

Intramurals and Club Sports

- The University joined with Pickler in West Springfield for pickleball, which is offered to student athletes every Wednesday.
- Working on golf simulators with the local Italian Club.
- Club sports are for students who want to play against other schools but may not be NCAA athletes.
- A club baseball team is starting this spring, with SGA's help.

Pep Rally and New Mascot

- A pep rally was held with great attendance, and a new mascot was unveiled.

Kenny Rogers Video

- A video of Kenny Rogers playing basketball was shown to the Board.

Honorary Degree Recipients

MOTION made by Trustee Jasmin and seconded by Trustee O'Rourke, the Student and Success and Learning Committee recommends approval to the full board the

granting of the honorary Doctor Humane Letters to General Clara Adams-Ender (Ret), effective February 19, 2026. There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE**, motion passed.

MOTION made by Trustee O'Rourke and seconded by Trustee Jasmin, the Student and Success and Learning Committee recommends approval to the full board the granting of the Honorary Doctor of Public Service to Mr. Kevin Queenin effective February 19, 2026. There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE**, motion passed.

Board Chair Salehi commented that "Kevin has been a tremendous force behind this University for many, many, many, many years, if not decades. And for what he has done in blood, tears, sweat and financial aid, is beyond comprehension for any one individual to do for this institution. So it's a great honor to offer this."

MOTION made by Trustee Jasmin and seconded by Trustee O'Rourke, the Student and Success and Learning Committee recommends approval to the full board the granting of the honorary Doctor Humane Letters to Lawrence Gwozdz effective February 19, 2026. There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE**, motion passed.

MOTION made by Trustee O'Rourke and seconded by Trustee Jasmin, the Student and Success and Learning Committee recommends approval to the full board the granting of the honorary Doctor of Laws to Maurice A. Watson effective February 19, 2026. There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE**, motion passed.

There being no further discussion,

MOTION made by Trustee Williams and seconded by Trustee Jasmin to adjourn the meeting. There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE**, motion passed by majority.

Meeting adjourned at 1:16 p.m..

Attachments presented at this meeting:

- a. Draft Minutes of December 18, 2025, Academic Affairs Committee
- b. Draft Minutes of December 18, 2025, JEDI Committee
- c. Power Point: SU SUCCESS Grant
- d. Power Point: Athletics Success Feb 2026
- e. Motion. Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters recipient, General Clara Adams-Ender (Ret)
- f. Supporting documents: General Clara Adams-Ender (Ret)
- g. Motion. Honorary Doctor of Public Service recipient, Mr. Kevin Queenin
- h. Supporting documents: Mr. Kevin Queenin
- i. Motion. Honorary Doctor of Laws recipient, Mr. Maurice Watson, J.D.
- j. Supporting documents: Mr. Maurice Watson, Esquire
- k. Motion. Honorary Doctor of Human Letters recipient, Mr. Lawrence Gwozdz
- l. Supporting documents: Mr. Lawrence Gwozdz

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 Student Success and Learning Committee meeting held on February 19, 2026.

Michael O'Rourke, Secretary

Date