Westfield
STATE UNIVERSITY

Board of Trustees
Special Meeting
October 1, 2025
4:00 p.m.
Via Zoom
Meeting ID: 952 2125 0979

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

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1. Call to Order   Board Chair Salehi

1. Items for Discussion   Board Chair Salehi
   a. 2025-2029 Strategic Plan

2. Items for Action
   a. Motion – 2025-2029 Strategic Plan   Board Chair Salehi

3. Adjournment   Board Chair Salehi

Attachments:
a. Strategic Plan
b. KPI's
c. Motion

WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY

Strategic Plan

2025–2029

INFINITE OPPORTUNITIES

Table of Contents

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

A Message from the President

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

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

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

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

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

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

Warmly,

Linda Thompson, *President*

Our Mission, Vision, and Values

MISSION

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

VISION

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

VALUES

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

↳ OUR VALUES

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

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

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

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

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

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

Milestones and Timeline

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

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

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

SEPTEMBER 19, 2023
Board of Trustees visioning session facilitated by SME Strategy Consulting.

SEPTEMBER TO OCTOBER 2023
12 Stakeholder interviews, visioning sessions, 9 campus surveys.

JANUARY 2024
Strategic Plan Committee appointed and charged by the President.

FEBRUARY 5 TO 7, 2024
Strategic Planning Committee 3-day goal setting retreat facilitated by SME Strategy consulting.

FEBRUARY TO JUNE 2024
The Strategic Plan Committee met bi-weekly and gathered feedback through meetings and town halls, and presented a document outlining goals, and actions to the President's Office and Cabinet for the next phase.

MAY 30, 2024
Dr. Richard Ricardi, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Success, Department of Higher Education visit with Strategic Plan Committee.

JUNE TO AUGUST 2024
A Cabinet retreat on June 25, guided by Dr. Richard Freeland, set institutional goals for the next five years, and an update presentation to the Board of Trustees on August 9 led to additional feedback.

SEPTEMBER 3, 2024
Faculty Opening Day Address and conversation.

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

JANUARY 2025
A Cabinet retreat was held to finalize goals and objectives. A writing team drafted the Five-Year Plan, including goals, metrics, and responsibilities.

FEBRUARY 2025
A draft document was submitted to the Board of Trustees for review.

MARCH 24–27, 2025
Feedback sessions with SME Strategy Consulting reviewed draft plan and gathered input from the campus community. Draft submitted to All-University Committee for review.

APRIL 28 TO MAY 6, 2025
The Committee of the MSCA hosted four town halls that focused on each of the four proposed goals.
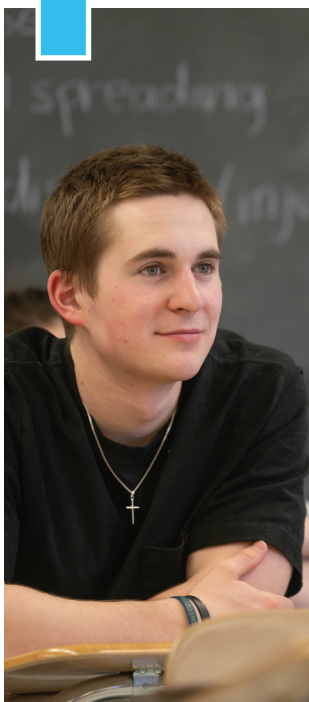
AUGUST 8, 2025
Finalization of the plan and submission to the Board of Trustees.

OCTOBER 2025
Submission to Board of Higher Education.

Strategic Priorities

1 UPDATE CURRICULUM OFFERINGS TO REFLECT TODAY'S WORKFORCE NEEDS

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

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

2 A STUDENT-CENTERED FOCUS ON STUDENT SUCCESS

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

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

3

A MULTI-YEAR PLAN ALIGNING RESOURCES TO INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES

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

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

4

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

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

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

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

Goals, Objectives, and Actions

Goal 1
FOSTER INNOVATIVE LEARNING

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

Objective 1: Support Faculty Development in Teaching, Research, and Creative Activity

Action 1.1: Reopen the Faculty Center in Fall 2025 with a full-time Staff Director.

Action 1.2: Provide funding to incentivize faculty use of high-impact practices and innovative teaching methods in WISE General Education and discipline-specific programs.

Action 1.3: Provide funding for DGCE faculty development in creating, delivering, and assessing online and on-ground programs.

Action 1.4: Establish faculty recognition awards for excellence in teaching, research and creative activity, advising, and service.

Objective 2: Ensure Curricula Remain Responsive to Disciplinary and Employer Needs

Action 2.1: Assess one WISE General Education learning outcome each year.

Action 2.2: By Fall 2026, develop assessment plans for universal and discipline-specific learning outcomes in every major.

Action 2.3: Evaluate graduate program design, degrees, certificates, and course offerings in 2025–26 to ensure relevance to employer needs and student demand.

Objective 2: *continued*

Action 2.4: Revise Academic Program Review and Annual Reports to include alumni outcomes and industry trends.

Action 2.5: Direct resources to future-focused programs, including artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies.

Action 2.6: Develop stackable, non-degree certificates and prior-learning credits to meet regional workforce needs.

Action 2.7: Ensure majors include opportunities for Undergraduate Research, Creative Activity, and other high-impact practices.

Action 2.8: Encourage inclusion of leadership competencies and global perspectives in curricula.

Objective 3: Use Data to Enhance Decision-Making

Action 3.1: Partner with Huron Consulting to assess institutional data analytics capacity.

Action 3.2: Align strategic plan, program review, annual reports, NECHE, and other data collection processes.

Action 3.3: Create a centralized institutional data lake with common definitions and privacy safeguards.

Action 3.4: Strengthen predictive models for student success to improve retention and graduation.

Objective 4: Enhance Quality of Academic Advising

Action 4.1: Implement dual advising for all first- and second-year students in Fall 2025 (faculty advisor + professional advisor).

Action 4.2: Offer Faculty Center workshops leading to a Certificate in Advising.

Action 4.3: Develop "Westfield in 4" plans for each major.

Action 4.4: Expand use of WSU 360 (EAB Starfish) to identify high-risk students and tailor interventions.

Action 4.5: Assign undeclared first-year students both a trained faculty and professional advisor.

Action 4.6: Implement assessment plans to ensure advising quality across departments.

Goals, Objectives, and Actions

Goal 2
ADVANCE STUDENT SUCCESS

Create an environment where every student has access to resources, support, and community needed to complete their program, secure meaningful employment, and contribute as leaders in their communities.

Objective 1: Build a Student-Ready Campus

Action 1.1: By 2026, engage all recognized student organizations in reviewing curricular and co-curricular experiences; SGA will report findings and recommendations.

Action 1.2: By Fall 2027, launch a credit-bearing leadership course available to all students.

Action 1.3: By Spring 2026, convene a task force to review student-led events and traditions; report findings by May 2026.

Action 1.4: By Fall 2025, establish baseline data to track retention, credit accumulation, and graduation rates.

Objective 2: Foster Collaboration and Engagement Across the Community

Action 2.1: By Spring 2026, appoint a campus committee to plan two major engagements each year.

Action 2.2: By Fall 2025, implement a redesigned academic support model that combines faculty mentorship with professional advising.

Action 2.3: By Fall 2025, initiate peer mentorship programs across all academic units.

Action 2.4: By December 2025, schedule an annual student engagement and campus climate survey.

Action 2.5: By December 2025, train programming units to use a centralized campus calendar.

Objective 3: Promote Holistic Student Well-Being

Action 3.1: By Spring 2026, catalog spaces, activities, and programs that support health and wellness.

Action 3.2: By Fall 2025, expand wellness services for graduate, part-time, and off-campus students.

Action 3.3: By Fall 2026, coordinate wellness resources (Health Center, Counseling, Center for Belonging, Fitness Center, Dining, Interfaith Center) for integrated student support.

Action 3.4: By Fall 2026, integrate alert and monitoring systems under the Dean of Students and Assistant Provost for Retention.

Objective 4: Expand Enrollment through New Student Opportunities

Action 4.1: By Fall 2025, present a strategic enrollment plan identifying new student cohorts.

Action 4.2: By 2027, encourage Athletics to consider two new programs to attract student-athletes.

Action 4.3: By Summer 2026, review and expand Living & Learning Communities.

Goals, Objectives, and Actions

Goal 3
OPTIMIZE STEWARDSHIP OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

Strengthen, broaden, and enhance the use of campus resources by strategically aligning human, financial, and facilities investments with institutional priorities.

Objective 1: Strengthen and Align Personnel Resources

Develop a comprehensive approach to staffing that supports university goals, enhances employee engagement, and builds a strong institutional culture.

Action 1.1: Design and implement an employee experience dashboard by FY26 to inform decision-making, staffing, and resource allocation.

Action 1.2: Develop a multi-year talent acquisition and engagement plan to align staffing with institutional needs, improve applicant pools, increase retention (especially in the first year), and expand leadership development opportunities.

Action 1.3: In FY27, secure a vendor partner to conduct a compensation analysis; deliver benchmarking insights, equity review, and implementation recommendations in FY28.

Action 1.4: By FY27, partner with a vendor to administer a biennial employee survey and report findings to leadership.

Action 1.5: Collaborate with senior leadership to assess integration of the Leadership for Public Purpose model as it applies to employees.

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

Objective 2: Build Financial Foundations
Promote financial stewardship, transparency, and campus-wide financial literacy through consistent communication, training, and engagement.

Action 2.1: Develop a financial communications plan (e.g., Finance Town Hall each semester, quarterly budget updates) by FY26 to increase fiscal knowledge campus-wide.

Action 2.2: Launch a Financial Skills Training program by late 2026 covering budgeting, reporting, purchasing, and accounting processes for staff who have financial responsibilities.

Objective 3: Manage Financial Resources Responsibly
Ensure consistent, transparent, and data-informed management of resources through multi-year planning and balanced budgeting.

Action 3.1: Develop a five-year financial forecast aligned with the Strategic Plan and NECHE requirements.

Action 3.2: Establish a reserve strategy that funds student-focused projects and revenue growth while maintaining long-term fiscal health.

Action 3.3: Require return-on-investment models (proformas, business cases) for all major resource requests.

Action 3.4: Implement processes to prioritize budget-relieving sources (e.g., foundation, grants, external funds) over additive requests.

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

Action 3.6: Develop an integrated enrollment and retention plan tied to financial projections.

Action 3.7: Explore expansion of athletic programs to support enrollment growth, Title IX compliance, and evolving student needs.

Objective 4: Launch a Comprehensive Fundraising Campaign
Expand philanthropic giving to strengthen the university's long-term financial sustainability.

Action 4.1: Establish campaign goals and fundraising priorities by FY26.

Action 4.2: Engage the Board of Trustees and Foundation Board to secure necessary resources by Fall 2025.

Action 4.3: By Fall 2026, form a campaign committee and finalize a multi-faceted case for support.

Action 4.4: Launch and manage a comprehensive capital campaign to raise $10M by FY29 and increase the Foundation's annual commitment to WSU by 50% by 2030.

Goals, Objectives, and Actions

Goal 3: OPTIMIZE STEWARDSHIP OF CAMPUS RESOURCES *continued*

Objective 5: Expand Non-Traditional Revenue Sources

Encourage a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship to diversify institutional revenue streams.

Action 5.1: Increase grant funding by 15% annually through FY29 by resourcing proposal development and revising indirect cost policies.

Action 5.2: Grow conference and event revenue by 10% annually (baseline $350k) through coordinated planning and asset management.

Action 5.3: Strengthen community, government, and industry partnerships to expand private investments, internships, and WSU visibility.

Action 5.4: Invest in new non-traditional programming aligned with labor market trends to grow revenue by 5% annually.

Objective 6: Improve Campus Grounds and Facilities

Create a clean, safe, sustainable, and modern campus environment that supports learning, student life, and competitive positioning.

Action 6.1: Fund the five-year technology plan to expand cybersecurity, connectivity, and classroom modernization.

Action 6.2: Finalize and implement the Campus Master Plan, prioritizing academic learning spaces, space utilization, campus beautification, outdoor recreation, and welcoming spaces for prospective students.

Action 6.3: Maintain and update the five-year critical repair plan and increase capital project investment to reduce deferred maintenance by 20%.

Action 6.4: Ensure long-term viability of the residence hall system; develop incentive programs for occupancy and meal plans, and expand scholarships through external funding.

Action 6.5: Formalize WSU's commitment to sustainability by funding staff, operations, and utilizing external benchmarks for best practices (e.g., AASHE).

Goal 4
AMPLIFY INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT & INFLUENCE

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

Objective 1: Strengthen Strategic Partnerships to Foster Innovation

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

Action 1.2: Host two networking events beginning in 2027 (scaling to four per year) and an annual Innovation Conference.

Action 1.3: By FY26, establish five cross-institutional partnerships with universities, industry, and nonprofits.

Action 1.4: By FY26, launch an Alumni Mentorship Program pairing juniors with alumni mentors.

Action 1.5: Form Advisory Boards within key majors to connect faculty with industry leaders.

Objective 2: Address Regional Needs Through Applied Research and Entrepreneurship

Action 2.1: Increase grant applications by 10% annually over five years, reaching $1M total.

Action 2.2: Add three new institutional research partners annually starting FY26.

Action 2.3: Develop an annual recognition program for three institutional partners (beginning FY26).

Objective 3: Expand Platforms for Community Engagement and Dissemination

Action 3.1: By 2026, launch monthly mailers to promote public engagement.

Action 3.2: By 2026, host two speaker series, lectures, or webinars each semester.

Action 3.3: Increase marketing and communication support for partnerships by 25% annually.

Goals, Objectives, Actions & Metrics

Goal 1
FOSTER INNOVATIVE LEARNING

Align institutional resources with innovative and relevant academic programs that prepare students for emerging career opportunities and lifelong success.

OBJECTIVE	METRICS
Objective 1: Support Faculty Development in Teaching, Research, and Creative Activity	• Number of faculty participating in professional development. • Faculty satisfaction with training and recognition programs. • Number of faculty awards granted annually.
Objective 2: Ensure Curricula Remain Responsive to Disciplinary and Employer Needs	• % of majors with updated assessment plans by 2026. • Number of programs revised to meet industry trends. • New certificates/credentials launched annually. • % of majors including high-impact practices and leadership/global content.
Objective 3: Use Data to Enhance Decision-Making	• Completion of Huron self-assessment (by FY26). • Usage rate of predictive analytics tools across units. • Improvements in retention and graduation rates tied to interventions.
Objective 4: Enhance Quality of Academic Advising	• % of first- and second-year students with dual advising. • Number of faculty completing Certificate in Advising. • % of high-risk students successfully supported via WSU 360. • Student satisfaction with advising (survey data).

Goal 2
ADVANCE STUDENT SUCCESS

Create an environment where every student has access to resources, support, and community needed to complete their program and thrive after graduation.

OBJECTIVE	METRICS
Objective 1: Build a Student-Ready Campus	• % of recognized student organizations engaged in review process. • SGA curricular & co-curricular review report submitted by Spring 2026. • Leadership course launched by Fall 2027.
Objective 2: Foster Collaboration and Engagement Across the Community	• Number of campus-wide engagements held annually (target: 2+). • % of academic support units with peer mentoring programs. • Annual engagement and climate survey completion rate. • Centralized calendar adoption rate across programming units.
Objective 3: Promote Holistic Student Well-Being	• Number of wellness spaces/programs cataloged by Spring 2026. • Utilization rates of wellness services (including grad/part-time students). • Completion of integrated wellness resource model by Fall 2026.
Objective 4: Expand Enrollment through New Student Opportunities	• Long-term enrollment plan completed by Fall 2025. • Number of new athletic/recreational programs added (target: 2 by 2027). • % growth in participation in Living & Learning Communities.

Goals, Objectives, Actions & Metrics

Goal 3
OPTIMIZE STEWARDSHIP OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

Strengthen, broaden, and enhance the use of campus resources by strategically aligning human, financial, and facilities investments with institutional priorities.

OBJECTIVE	METRICS
Objective 1: Strengthen and Align Personnel Resources	• Employee retention rate (especially first-year employees). • % of staff completing annual professional development. • Satisfaction scores from biennial employee survey.
Objective 2: Build Financial Foundations	• Attendance at Finance Town Halls (% of employees engaged). • % of employees with financial responsibility completing financial training. • Pre/post training knowledge increase (%). • Satisfaction with financial transparency (survey data).
Objective 3: Manage Financial Resources Responsibly	• Balanced annual budget (within 2–3% of forecast). • Reserve levels as % of operating budget. • % of resource requests using ROI analysis.
Objective 4: Launch a Comprehensive Fundraising Campaign	• Total dollars raised toward $10M goal. • % of campaign milestones met on schedule. • Number of donors and donor retention rates. • Annual Foundation contribution growth (baseline FY25).
Objective 5: Expand Non-Traditional Revenue Sources	• % growth in grant funding (target 15% annually). • % growth in conference/event revenue (target 10% annually). • Number of new partnerships formed annually. • % increase in non-traditional revenue (10–15% annually).
Objective 6: Improve Campus Grounds and Facilities	• % reduction in deferred maintenance (target 20% by 2029). • Number of technology upgrades completed on schedule. • Residence hall occupancy rates (90% by 2029). • Sustainability rating/recognition (e.g., AASHE STARS level). • Student satisfaction with facilities (survey data).

Goal 4
AMPLIFY INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT AND INFLUENCE

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

OBJECTIVE	METRICS
Objective 1: Strengthen Strategic Partnerships to Foster Innovation	• Innovation Institute established by FY28. • Number of networking events and participants annually. • Number of cross-institutional partnerships (target: 5 by FY27). • Number of students in Alumni Mentorship Program. • Advisory Boards established in 3 key majors.
Objective 2: Address Regional Needs Through Applied Research and Entrepreneurship	• % increase in grant applications (10% annually). • Total grant dollars secured ($1M over 5 years). • Number of new institutional research partners (target: +3 annually). • Annual recognition awards presented (target: 3).
Objective 3: Expand Platforms for Community Engagement and Dissemination	• Monthly public engagement mailers distributed (12 per year). • Number of speaker series, lectures, webinars (target: 2 per semester). • % increase in marketing/communications support (25% annually). • Audience reach/engagement data (attendance, views, impressions).

Aligning Strategic Priorities with Statewide System Initiatives

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

OVERARCHING SYSTEM-WIDE PRIORITIES

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

Westfield State University actions:

- Track student success metrics, such as first-year retention, credit accumulation, and four- and six-year graduation rates, to ensure students are progressing towards degree completion.

- Expand wellness services to meet the needs of graduate, part-time, and off-campus students.

- Administer an annual survey to assess student engagement and inform inclusive practices.

- Develop funding opportunities for projects by partnering with government agencies, foundations, and private industry to create funding for projects that have practical, community-oriented applications. The University aims to increase the number of grant awards by 50 percent over a five-year period while increasing the dollar amount to $1 million annually.

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

Westfield State University actions:

- Develop a credit-bearing leadership course accessible to all students.

- Cultivate and support a culture of applied research, entrepreneurship, and societal application.

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

Westfield State University actions:

- Create stand-alone, stackable, and other non-degree certificate programs and credentials, including credit for prior learning, to support the workforce needs of local and regional partners.

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

- Conduct an evaluation of graduate program design, support services, degrees, certificates, and course offerings over the 2025-26 Academic Year to ensure they are relevant to current employer needs and meet student demand.

- Promote public engagement through applied research that addresses societal needs. Host annual speaker series, public lectures, webinars, and outreach events where we bring important topics to this region to engage with the external community, and scholars can highlight their work to diverse audiences, encouraging community involvement and awareness.

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

Westfield State University actions:

- Provide funding to incentivize faculty development for utilizing high impact practices and innovative content delivery in the WISE General Education and discipline-specific programs.

- Create an Institute of Innovation that will direct and support Westfield State University's innovation ecosystem, coordinating the efforts of an innovation network of students, faculty, staff, advisory board members, and strategic community partners.

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

- Evaluate data collection needs, including a review of Strategic Plan alignment, Academic Program Review, Annual Reports, NECHE accreditation, and other data collection processes.

- Provide marketing and media support for research outreach. Offer resources and opportunities to help researchers present their work in accessible formats such as blogs, podcasts, or video series to highlight on our website and other venues to reach a wider audience.

Strategic Planning Committee

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

Strategic Planning Committee Members

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

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

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

Ms. Jessica Tansey
Assistant Dean, Graduate and Continuing Education

Dr. Josh Hettrick
Associate Director of Space Management

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

Laura Blockel
Director of Corporate and Foundation Grants, Institutional Advancement

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

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

Mr. Luis Gonzalez
Maintainer, Dower Center

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

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

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

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

Dr. Max Saito
Professor, Department of Communication

Mr. Michael Mazeika
Director of Undergraduate Admission

Capt. Mike Foyle
Assistant Director of University Police

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

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

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

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

Ms. Sierra Alexander
Diversity and Inclusion Senior Program Coordinator

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

Dr. Susanne Chuku
Professor, Department of Economics

Ms. Alexis Pratt
Student Representative

Mr. Daniel Currier
Student Trustee and Student Government Association Representative

Westfield State University

Westfield State University KPI Dashboard

On Track 🟢
In Process 🟡
Below Target 🔴

Category	KPI	Status	Progress	2025 Baseline	5-year Target
Enrollment	Total New Students	In Process	🟡	1027	1076
Student Success	1st and 2nd Year Retention	In Process	🟡	71%	76%
Student Success	6-Year Graduation Rate	In Process	🟡	55%	61%
Student Success	Post-Graduation Outcomes	In Process	🟡	83%	88%
University	Faculty Engagement	In Process	🟡	%	%
Finance	Composite Financial Index	In Process	🟡	3.0	>3.0
Finance	Facilities Condition Index	In Process	🟡	15%	12%
Finance	DGCE Revenue Growth	In Process	🟡	FY25 Total	+10%
Advancement	Total Fundraising Revenues	In Process	🟡	2.397M	5M
Advancement	Alumni Engagement	In Process	🟡	1357	
Advancement	Total Donors	In Process	🟡	1314	

September 19, 2025

Westfield STATE UNIVERSITY

Board of Trustees

October 21, 2025

MOTION

To approve the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan as presented.

Ali R. Salehi, Chair	Date