



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Academic and Student Affairs Committee

October 13, 2021

Minutes

Owl's Nest (Room 018), Ely Campus Center

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Committee Chair Dr. Gloria Williams, Vice Chair Madeline Landrau (joined the meeting at 9:35 AM), Secretary Chloe Sanfacon, and Trustees William Reichelt, Lydia Martinez-Alvarez, and Dr. Robert Martin.

TRUSTEE GUESTS PRESENT: Trustees Paul Boudreau, Kevin Queenin, and Ali Salehi.

Dr. Linda Thompson, President of Westfield State University, was also present.

The meeting was called to order at 9:31 AM by Committee Chair Williams.

MOTION made by Trustee Reichelt, seconded by Trustee Martin, to approve the minutes of the June 29, 2021, meeting. There being no discussion, **Motion passed unanimously.**

Committee Chair Williams welcomed Dr. Juline Mills, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, who brought forth the following items.

Registration Reports. Dr. Monique Lopez, Registrar, gave updates on the materials provided.

- **Registered Student Enrollment** Fall 2021 showed 4,245 undergraduate students and 706 graduate students totaling 4,951 for student enrollment. It was requested to see how the bottom line figures change over time. A five-year span of the numbers will be provided at the December meeting.
- **Undergraduate Enrollment by Major** showed the academic departments and what each has for students.
- **Graduate Enrollment by Major** showed a breakdown of the 706 active and registered students, which will fluctuate a great deal.
- **Undergraduate Seat Utilization Report** showed the enrollment total cap and percentage of seats filled at 94.53 percent. The average is 98 percent, but 95 percent is a good benchmark for Westfield State. There are 5.47 percent unused seats. A five-year span of seat utilization will be presented to show how these figures have condensed over time. It was requested that future reports be broken down into the school structure.
- **Graduate Seat Utilization Report.** The percentage of unused seats is 30.71 percent. Although there is work to bring that figure down, we need to offer seats in the courses students need. There is a dramatic downturn in spring for unused seats.
- **Retention and Graduation Rates.** The first term retention rate is higher than seen in several years, but the two year retention is lower than the past twelve years. The goal is for graduation within

four years, but many commuter students extend graduation. New tools were added to help students plan their academic career to build around their lifestyle in order to help retention.

- It was requested that these reports be provided quarterly. Additionally, at the February meeting, data will be broken down by demographics/race as well as majors to see what type of students are entering and persisting in the programs.
- The Center for Student Success and Engagement, tutoring, and early access initiatives are important to get students connected when they arrive. There is an early warning system in place and students on probation receive dedicated individual advising and support. A smaller school structure will help, as well as a new director of advising and two additional advisors being hired.
- It was requested, in addition to graduation data, to provide information from the Board of Higher Education (BHE) or National Clearing House on those students who leave but graduate elsewhere as it gives a full picture of why those students may have left, which is typically not for academic reasons. Data points will be provided through the year to see how we are doing.
- Some majors attract students (like criminal justice), others are destination programs (like biology, art, music), and some are focused on providing a general education curriculum (40 credits) for students. There will be programs with low majors because their primary role is service to the institution instead of generating revenue. Additional fees for customized classes with low enrollment is being discussed. On average, it takes 17 filled seats per class to break even. For the nursing and physician assistant programs, the caps need to be revised on the seat utilization form.
- Funding for college expenses for immigrant students was discussed. The last mile fund is currently available to help finish college, but we need to work on a pool of funds for a broader group of students who may have a crisis. Funding usually sits with the president's office. President Thompson's appeal for \$1,000 by 1,000 people could be available for students who may not qualify for financial aid. Trustee Reichelt left the meeting at 10:11 and returned at 10:13 AM.

Board of Higher Education Academic Agenda. Provost Mills stated that due to time, the BHE FY22 Priorities and the institution's strategies and progress in meeting them will be discussed at a future meeting. This topic will also be discussed at the October 27 Trustee Convening.

Campus Academic Master Plan (CAMP). Provost Mills, Dr. Brian Jennings, Interim Dean of Undergraduate Studies, and Dr. Enrique Morales-Diaz, Interim Dean of Faculty, discussed the setting and groundwork for a Campus Academic Master Plan and will be seeking input from the Board of Trustees.

- CAMP is the University's blueprint to academic success, innovation, and evolution and we will be the first state institution to do one. Academics are the heart of the institution and define where we are going. It is not a prescriptive plan, but will guide how we modify and grow as society and the workforce evolves. It will ask:
 - Who are we?
 - Where do we want to be?
 - How can we get there?
- CAMP will inform the academic direction of the institution for the next five-to-ten years and guide prioritization and decision making on resource allocation, program development, faculty recruitment, fundraising, and enrollment priorities. The Advisory Committee on Academic Planning (ACAP) will be reconstituted. The timeline for development and implementation of the Plan was given and an update will be provided to this committee at the May meeting.
- To remain innovative, academics will inform changes in curriculum, facilities, technology, community, and campus culture.
- Outcomes and assessments of CAMP will include key performance indicators of success in:
 - Core priorities, goals, and principles
 - Alignment with the Strategic Plan
 - Implementation of the plan

Chair Martin stated this is a huge undertaking reaching into every operation of the University connected to the academic plan and asked for some examples for using CAMP to make decisions. Provost Mills stated the Academic Master Plan has to be realistic and we need to look at funding and the needs of the University. We need to connect existing and new programs to academic resources (space, equipment and people) through the length of the plan by investing in what the area's workforce needs. Providing full, holistic support to the departments will allow the institution to go into the next Strategic Plan planning process with a clear understanding of where we are going and what is needed. The Campus Academic Master Plan is needed to support the standards of NECHE. It was requested to provide a document showing how the UEAAC recommendations, Strategic Plan, and CAMP connect and complement each other with the number of years we are into each plan.

Student Affairs Overview. Maggie Balch, Dean of Students, shared the great things happening with students outside the classroom. Intentional programming and learning opportunities are created for students using different strategies each year. Trustee Martinez-Alvarez left the meeting at 10:44 AM and returned at 10:48 AM. Ms. Balch gave an update on the offices providing programming for students. The Office of Student Activities, Involvement, and Leadership (SAIL) created the Owl Advantage program that offers programming in the topics of emotional and spiritual, physical, social justice, environmental, professional, social, and intellectual. Staffing, service and programming was shared for Residential Life, Athletics, Career Center, Counseling Center, Health Services, and Public Safety. Community standards in student conduct, Title IX and collaborations were also shared.

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:59 AM.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

- a. Draft Minutes of June 29, 2021, Meeting
- b. Registration Data Fall 2021
- c. Undergraduate Enrollment by Major
- d. Graduate Enrollment by Major
- e. Undergraduate Seat Utilization Report
- f. Graduate Seat Utilization Report
- g. Retention and Graduation Rates
- h. BHE FY22 Priorities
- i. BHE August 23 Meeting Presentation
- j. Proposal: Campus Academic Master Plan (CAMP) Committee
- k. CAMP PowerPoint Presentation
- l. Student Affairs Overview Presentation