

Bridgewater State University  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
December 9, 2020  
Virtual Zoom Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Trustees Durgin, Alexander, Caulfield, Benson, Denterlein, Longo, Murphy, MacCormack, Oliari, Turchon

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: President Clark; Provost Ismaili; Chief of Staff Leuenberger; Vice Presidents Gentlewarrior, Jason, Jean, Powers, Oravec, Shropshire, Molife, Zuromski

Under the order suspending certain provisions of the open meeting law of the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30A, as declared on March 12, 2020 by Governor Baker, having been complied with, and a quorum of the Board virtually present, the Board of Trustees held a zoom conference call meeting on December 9, 2020 with Chairman Durgin presiding.

Chairman Durgin called the meeting to order at 4:05pm.

On motion duly made via roll call vote, Trustee MacCormack-yes, Trustee Longo-yes, Trustee Alexander-yes, Trustee Caulfield-yes, Trustee Durgin-yes, Trustee Murphy-yes, Trustee Denterlein-yes, Trustee Benson-yes, Trustee Turchon-yes, Trustee Oliari-yes, it was to approve the minutes from the Board of Trustees meeting held on October 15, 2020.  
(Attachment)

VOTED  
FOR: Unanimous  
CARRIED

**Chairman's  
Message**

Chairman Durgin welcomed everyone. He stated that he attended a faculty rally in October which was intended to offer support for current and future funding for higher education. About 200 people were present with social distancing. He also attended an enthusiastic celebration of the new photonics program via zoom and offered his congratulations to Dean Porter-Utley.

The Trustee training has been helpful and informative. For those who have not been able to participate, there are sessions coming up.

Dr. Irina Seceleanu, MSCA Chapter President, addressed the Board. She appreciates the support at the car rally and is grateful to the Trustees who attended. The many rallies paid off in achieving level

funding. The current funding is not nearly enough to weather the storm. Need to recognize the fight will be won if we join forces. She appreciated the remarks from Maxwell Morrongiello, SGA student, who gave an amazing speech. When we stand united, we can secure funding that is needed. The contract itself is a product of collaboration, and respect for the results of this collaboration is essential if we are going to keep working together. There are great concerns about what is happening at Salem State as it undermines our contract and is diminishing the collaborative work.  
(Full remarks attached to minutes)

Trustee Benson noted the SGA has been working to advocate for the pass/no pass policy. For the students who have been struggling with the virtual format, this is a huge relief. They collected 700 responses from students. Members have been meeting regarding the Student Union. Trustee Longo commented Bridgewater residents are very happy with the BSU students for wearing masks, etc.

### **President's Report**

President Clark wished the Board and others happy holidays. He thanked Dr. Seceleanu for her comments and partnership. He congratulated students for their efforts/success with pass/no pass policy. Also thanked the Board for its engagement and support during this challenging time. There are four challenges converging at one time: pandemic, budget items/revenue losses, enrollment decline and racial justice. His staff is working to find creative ways to save and keep BSU affordable by adding financial aid dollars, refusing to layoff or furlough any employee. BSU will emerge as a stronger university.

Regarding pandemic planning, as of Thanksgiving, classes moved to full remote learning. BSU was noted as one of the most successful in the state for its planning. He gave great credit to Dr. Chris Frazer for all his efforts. Dr. Frazer recently conducted a webinar for the entire state. BSU has 88 positive cases which is less than our sister institutions; we are doing very well and he is proud of our students. The Spring plan was released which will substantially be the same. He is very pleased with advocacy efforts across the state in advocating for level funding. Through great efforts, the deficit is \$27M and we won't have to draw on our reserves. Enrollment is down 3.7% due to the pandemic. Spring transfer numbers are down which was anticipated. It's too early to make assessment for the Fall. Transfer inquiries are down 54% for the Fall. There is tremendous work taking place to reach out to students to come to BSU.

Remarkable work is taking place with racial justice. Ranked by educational reform for being number 75 in the U.S. and number 2 in Massachusetts for moving students up the social elevator. He thanked Dr. Mary Grant, Trustee Alexander and Dr. Carolyn Petrosino. Trustee Alexander, along with Dr. Petrosino, acknowledged the vice

presidents involved with the social justice efforts: Brenda Molife, Joe Oravec, Sabrina Gentlewarrior, Keri Powers. With all that has happened, Dr. Grant has embraced the ‘tornado’ and he appreciates all that she does. Dr. Grant thanked Trustee Alexander for his leadership and partnership. There’s an opportunity to build on a good foundation and become better. They have listened to the students’ voices and how they are feeling. We are doing this out of love and passion to determine how we can do better. Words alone are not enough; we need to take action. The Task Force has to be inclusive, transparent and rigorous in its approach. The response from faculty has been strong. Trustee Alexander commented Dr. Petrosino is quite disciplined and respected in her field. Core values have been established as well as six independent subcommittees with a common charge. A project time frame and phases are established and the goal is to bring forth recommendations by the end of March. This work is not done in a vacuum. He thanked President Clark for putting himself and the university on report. He appreciates everyone and all their efforts. Trustee Alexander also thanked Jill Beckwith for her tremendous work.

ACTION/  
INFORMATION  
ITEMS

EXECUTIVE

President’s Expenses and Upcoming Travel

As an information item, the quarterly report of the president’s expenses was provided.  
(Attachment)

ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

Sabbatical Leave Requests

Committee Chair MacCormack noted there were 24 faculty who requested a sabbatical leave. Provost Ismaili acknowledged the extraordinary efforts by faculty and librarians in working with our students through this difficult time. This slate covers 15 academic departments and 4 colleges. Abstracts provide an excellent insight into the breadth and scope of the work of our faculty. Every application was reviewed, discussed and feedback provided. He thanked Dr. Pam Russell for her efforts.

On motion duly made via roll call vote, Trustee MacCormack-yes, Trustee Longo-yes, Trustee Alexander-yes, Trustee Caulfield-yes, Trustee Durgin-yes, Trustee Murphy-yes, Trustee Denterlein-yes, Trustee Benson-yes, Trustee Turchon-yes, Trustee Oliari-yes, it was that the Board of Trustees approves the sabbatical leave requests as recommended in the memorandum from President Clark dated December 2, 2020.  
(Attachment)

VOTED  
FOR: Unanimous  
CARRIED

Letter of Intent (LOI): B.A. Degree in Childhood Studies

Provost Ismaili recognized the faculty who were deeply engaged in this work. With this particular interdisciplinary, this B.A. degree will have a different perspective on childhood studies. This degree will attract students who are interested in working with families and children in many different ways. Students will be prepared to enter different professions. A letter is sent to the BHE for their approval and will be fast tracked so that the program will be available as soon as possible. He also thanked Dean Alcon for all her efforts.

On motion duly made via roll call vote, Trustee MacCormack-yes, Trustee Longo-yes, Trustee Alexander-yes, Trustee Caulfield-yes, Trustee Durgin-yes, Trustee Murphy-yes, Trustee Denterlein-yes, Trustee Benson-yes, Trustee Turchon-yes, Trustee Oliari-yes, it was that the Board of Trustees approves the submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI) to the Board of Higher Education (BHE) for a new B.A. Degree in Childhood Studies at Bridgewater State University as described in the memorandum from President Clark dated December 2, 2020.

(Attachment)

VOTED

FOR: Unanimous

CARRIEDUniversity Fact Sheet, Five-Year Trends

Dr. Michael Young reviewed the University Fact Sheet. The official headcount was down 230 students; 2% decrease from last year and a 3.3% decrease over the past 5 years. Graduate headcount has increased by about 12.3% over the past 5 years. Total headcount for the Fall was 1,613. Graduation and retention rates for 4-year and 6-year both decreased; completion rate went up. Retention rates are down. Distribution of class is very similar. Degrees awarded decreased. Student to faculty ratios have held steady.

(Attachment)

Enrollment Update

Vice President Oravec provided a preliminary report. Students and families are delaying their decisions. We are 21 days into registration. Residence Hall occupancy for the Spring is about 1,500. Fall enrollment - deposits for new first-year students, transfers and graduate students are up. Recruitment efforts are very aggressive.

Financial Aid has managed the Federal Cares Act money and will allocate \$4.4M by Spring 2021. Lastly, fall occupancy is at 39.2% as of a few weeks ago.

(Attachment)

## FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

FY21/Q1 Trust Funds Report (7/1/20-9/30/20)

Vice President Shropshire noted the significant revenue changes for external operations are due to summer events which couldn't be

held. This revenue line item was eliminated. The Building Authority assisted with the Res Life Trust Fund. He acknowledged Vice President Jason who did a thorough assessment of the utilities which resulted in savings. There was an increase in dining trust fund which was anticipated. Awaiting Spring occupancy numbers.

VOTED  
FOR: Unanimous  
CARRIED

On motion duly made via roll call vote, Trustee MacCormack-yes, Trustee Longo-yes, Trustee Alexander-yes, Trustee Caulfield-yes, Trustee Durgin-yes, Trustee Murphy-yes, Trustee Denterlein-yes, Trustee Benson-yes, Trustee Turchon-yes, Trustee Oliari-yes, it was that the Board of Trustees approves the FY2021/Q1 Trust Funds Report as recommended in the memorandum from President Clark dated December 2, 2020.

(Attachment)

Meal Plan Rates for AY2021-22

Vice President Jason noted the meal plan rates will not increase for next year.

VOTED  
FOR: Unanimous  
CARRIED

On motion duly made via roll call vote, Trustee MacCormack-yes, Trustee Longo-yes, Trustee Alexander-yes, Trustee Caulfield-yes, Trustee Durgin-yes, Trustee Murphy-yes, Trustee Denterlein-yes, Trustee Benson-yes, Trustee Turchon-yes, Trustee Oliari-yes, it was that the Board of Trustees approves the meal plan rates for AY2021-22 as recommended in the memorandum from President Clark dated December 2, 2020.

(Attachment)

FY2021/Q1 Budget Report (7/1/20-9/30/20)

Vice President Shropshire noted they still have not received the state budget. \$41M revenue loss expected; with adjustments, it is now at \$27M. Optimistic they will make headway with Spring enrollment. Expense side is doing very well. He cited the open positions that are part of the hiring freeze has helped financially, but acknowledged staff have taken on extra responsibilities and are working extra hard which is appreciated.

(Attachment)

FY2021/Q1 Contract Report (7/1/20-9/30/20)

Vice President Jason reviewed the quarterly report.

(Attachment)

Capital Projects Update

Vice President Jason provided a summary of projects on campus.

(Attachment)

OTHER  
BUSINESS

Chairman Durgin stated he cannot express enough about the faculty, leadership and students; it is a great pride point for him to serve with everyone.

On motion duly made via roll call vote, Trustee MacCormack-yes, Trustee Longo-yes, Trustee Alexander-yes, Trustee Caulfield-yes, Trustee Durgin-yes, Trustee Murphy-yes, Trustee Denterlein-yes, Trustee Benson-yes, Trustee Turchon-yes, Trustee Oliari-yes, it was that the meeting be adjourned (5:50 pm).

VOTED  
FOR: Unanimous  
CARRIED

Respectfully submitted,

*Margaret A. Caulfield, Esq.*

Margaret A. Caulfield, Esq.  
Secretary

Minutes prepared by:  
Tracey Keif