

Bridgewater State University
Board of Trustees Meeting
June 12, 2025
6:00pm
Dunn Conference Room
Hybrid

MEMBERS PRESENT: Trustees Antonucci, Battaglino, Giles (Zoom), Prince, Rose, Taylor, Turchon, Vieira

MEMBERS ABSENT: Trustees Cesero, Koutoujian and Ulett

ALSO PRESENT: President Clark; Chief of Staff Leuenberger; Vice Presidents Bell, Croft, Gentlewarrior, Jean, Powers, Shropshire, Zuromski; CDO Oliver; Senior Advisor deMacedo

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 former Governor Baker, having been complied with, and a quorum of the Board present, the Board of Trustees held a meeting on June 12, 2025, with Chairperson Taylor presiding.

Chairperson Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:05pm. He put forth a motion that a unanimous vote will be deemed to eliminate the need for a roll call. If a vote is not unanimous, then a roll call vote will be conducted.

On motion duly made via roll call vote, Trustee Rose-yes, Trustee Vieira-yes, Trustee Turchon-yes, Trustee Battaglino-yes, Trustee Prince-yes, Trustee Antonucci-yes, Trustee Giles-yes, Trustee Taylor-yes, it was

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

that the Board of Trustees dispense with a roll call vote for each unanimous vote for the duration of this meeting.

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Prince, Battaglino) it was to approve the minutes from the Board of Trustees meeting held on April 15, 2025.
(Attachment)

**Chairperson's
Report**

Chairperson Taylor noted he was pleased to attend several year-end festivities (Departmental Honors, Athletics Awards Celebration, Undergraduate Commencement). He acknowledged the staff who worked at commencement as well as the generous gift from the Hales.

He noted Vice Chair Battaglino has put forth her candidacy for the position to serve on the Board of Higher Education and she

represented BSU very well in explaining her reasons for wanting to serve in this role.

This is Trustee Rose's last meeting as student trustee. It has been a privilege to serve with them. This position was just one of the many roles they held this past year (Army ROTC, part-time position as an EMT and a student). Their work ethic and time management skills are phenomenal. He is certain Trustee Rose will have an accomplished career from which BSU and our country will benefit.

Student Trustee Update

Trustee Rose spoke about the new student trustee, Dhareen Jean-Michel, who is an impressive sophomore majoring in biology with a concentration in cellular molecular biology; major in physics with a concentration of astrophysics and minoring in mathematics. He also is an intern at a marine biology lab in Cape Cod and the observatory on campus. He has done outstanding work this past year and served as a senator for the SGA.

The MBTA project is going strong, and they are thankful for the aid to assist BSU students.

Trustee Rose had parting words noting the time served as student trustee has been very rewarding and that they truly care about BSU's mission, values and vision. BSU has been welcoming, compassionate and an intellectually rigorous environment, enriching the community through diversity, equity and inclusion which has been their guide throughout their journey here. Chair Taylor presented them with a framed certificate in acknowledgement of their term as student trustee.

President's Report

On behalf of the entire campus, President Clark thanked the Trustees for leaning in this past year. He appreciates the support of BSU's mission. He thanked Trustee Rose for their advocacy, passion and effectiveness in getting things done. Rose is our beacon of hope.

President Clark's updates:

They recently celebrated 27 members of the campus community who retired this past year.

Congratulated student competitors who came out on top in a statewide event as 'best in the state' at responding to a simulated cyber attack. BUS's baseball team was the MASCAC champions and participated in the NCAA games.

He thanked Vice President Jason for her efforts in receiving an award as equity champions of excellence supplier diversity office award.

BSU lost its retired long-time football coach Peter Mazzaferro. Jack Jones also recently passed (the Jones House is named after he and his wife). Their efforts and dedication as alums was truly appreciated.

Mr. Jones left his entire estate to BSU, which we are truly grateful.

JD Chesloff, president and CEO of Mass. Business Leaders Roundtable, was recently on campus and he was impressed with what BSU is doing. They are one of the biggest employers in Massachusetts.

The Hale Street property was released for housing by the commonwealth. President Clark testified in support of the Bright Act last week.

There is a bill to spend some of the millionaire tax. The senate carved \$175M for public higher ed for deferred maintenance. \$5M has been earmarked for the Kelly Gym.

The budget for FY26 is not yet resolved at the state level. They continue to grapple with Federal policy changes which is documented on BSU's intranet site. Grant applications are now incorporating language that we may not agree with.

Many events have taken place at the end of the semester. Mr. Hale came to the Matt Light event.

New students are on campus for orientation.

Next week an Honorary Degree will be presented to Pedro Pires, founder of the modern nation of Cape Verde.

In thinking about engagement in the world, Canada comes to mind as BSU has a partnership with this country. He wrote a letter to the Prime Minister Mark Carney reminding him that BSU's partnership with Canada is critical and invited him to be a commencement speaker.

Canadian Studies Presentation

President Clark introduced Andy Holman, Professor, History, to speak about what BSU has done through the Canadian Studies Program. It has been on campus for 52 years, and we have become a center for student scholars, entrepreneurs, etc. This program has a rich presence on and off campus. Leading up to 2025, there were a lot of wonderful things happening. 2025 has been difficult due to the change of the relationship with Canada and the U.S. As a result of the tariffs, and the 51st state rhetoric, this has changed the nature of our friendship and has affected the Canadian Studies Program. He spoke about the nature of the crisis and conclusions of what this means for us: we have a long history of trade and economic partnership; tariffs have never been used as punishment. Annexation to the U.S. is a bugbear that haunts Canada which creates a sense of deep fear. Canada had a national election this year as they had to select someone who could come up against Trump. Today a travel advisory was issued for those who are thinking about traveling to the U.S. Canadians have responded by encouraging their citizens to buy Canadian and sing patriotic songs. Universities in Canada are encouraging the staff to not travel to the U.S. for conferences, etc. The trade relationship is broken. The relationship between ordinary people will take a long time to repair. There are hurt feelings and anger. There is an opportunity for BSU to think about how

we can develop our programs and be useful. They have reached out to Canadian partners letting them know that we understand and are sympathetic.

It's important to do more of what we do anyway – teach, reach out to Americans here to teach them about the depth of the problem and how it will be difficult to repair, but important to repair. Will need to continue to deliver expertise off campus, support the missions of other institutions like ours, and basic things – email/call Canadian friends, fly the Canadian flag, wear lapel pins, etc.

EXECUTIVE

Board of Trustees Budget – FY2026

Chairman Taylor noted the Board of Trustees budget is level funded for FY2026.

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Prince, Battaglino) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the Board of Trustees budget for FY2026 as recommended by the Executive Committee and outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated June 5, 2025. (Attachment)

Honorary Degree Award for Pedro Pires, Former President of Cabo Verde

Chairman Taylor noted President Clark has brought forward the recommendation to award an Honorary Degree to Pedro Pires at a special upcoming event on campus.

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Vieira, Prince) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the recommendation from the Executive Committee to award an Honorary Degree of Public Service to Pedro Pires which will be presented to him on June 20, 2025 at the 50th Anniversary of the founding of Cabo Verde celebration, as outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated June 5, 2025. (Attachment)

Honorary Degree 2025 Undergraduate Commencement Ratification (Hale)

On motion duly made and seconded (Prince, Battaglino) it was that the Board of Trustees ratifies the recommendation to award an Honorary Degree of Public Service to Robert T. Hale, Jr. at the University's 2025 Undergraduate Commencement Convocation previously, and unanimously, approved by the Executive Committee and outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated June 5, 2025. (Attachment)

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

Delegation of Authority Contract for R. Mullen & Associates (Tillinghast Hall Faculty Offices Upgrades)

Vice President Shropshire noted under the Delegation of Authority, approval was sought by the Executive Committee for the contract with R. Mullen & Associates. He had a lengthy discussion with Trustee Prince regarding the inability to meet the minority goals, and noted Trustee Prince reluctantly agreed to approve the contract. However, it was not due to a lack of effort on behalf of the Procurement team. (Attachment)

Strategic Plan 2.0 Divisional and Interdivisional End-of-Year Update

Chief of Staff Leuenberger noted the Cabinet end-of-year report for their divisional priorities was provided as an information item and will be reviewed and discussed at the August Board Retreat. (Attachment)

President's Accrued Vacation and Sick Time

The attached report was provided as an information item. (Attachment)

President's Expenses and Travel (February – April 2025)

The attached report was provided as an information item. (Attachment)

FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

Continuation Budget for FY2026

Vice President Shropshire stated it is custom for the Trustees to approve a preliminary budget to carry through to mid-October when the Board next meets. The recommendation is based on the current year budget amount not to exceed \$69M.

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Prince, Battaglino) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the Continuation Budget for FY2026 in the amount of \$69,093,123 (prorated expenditure level for 3.5 months) as recommended by the Finance and Operations Committee and outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated May 28, 2025. (Attachment)

FY2025/Q3 Trust Fund Report

Vice President Shropshire noted projections were made for the remainder of the year. There were some variations in the revenue and expenditures which resulted in some excess revenue.

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Vieira, Battaglino) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the FY2025/Q3 Trust Fund Report as recommended by the Finance and Operations Committee and outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated May 28, 2025. (Attachment)

Student Tuition and Fee Schedule for AY2025-26

Vice President Shropshire stated they are recommending not to exceed a 3.9% increase for student tuition and fees. As stated in the Strategic Plan, they try to not exceed the inflation amount. It's important to be aware of the increasing costs (collective bargaining) as well as the rate increases at our peer institutions. BSU is the 7th most affordable.

VOTED

FOR: Unanimous

CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Prince, Antonucci) it was that the Board of Trustees approves a 3.9% increase in the mandatory tuition and fees for the academic year 2025-26 as recommended by the Finance and Operations Committee and outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated May 28, 2025.

(Attachment)

Contract with Gage Construction Company (RSU Ground Floor Renovations)

Vice President Shropshire noted the contract with Gage Construction is over \$1M. They received 12 bids and Gage Construction was the lowest qualified bidder and the company exceeded both minority- and women-owned business.

VOTED

FOR: Unanimous

CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Antonucci, Battaglini) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the contract with Gage Construction Company (RSU Ground Floor Renovations) as recommended by the Finance and Operations Committee and outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated May 28, 2025.

(Attachment)

FY2025/Q3 Contracts Report

Vice President Shropshire noted the report is brought for informational purposes.

(Attachment)

FY2025/Q3 Budget Report

Vice President Shropshire stated overall they did better on revenues by \$1.1M and they had salary savings of \$1.3M. Unfortunately, BSU lost \$2.1M in financial aid support from the state. Academic Affairs is projected to be under budget which is helpful and appreciated.

(Attachment)

Federal Financial Aid Proposed Changes

Vice President Shropshire noted AVP Biechler provided a lengthy report at the committee meeting of what is currently happening with the Federal government and their proposed changes. There will be loan impacts, but it will not affect BSU students. These possible changes will harm private institutions.

Capital Projects Update

The Capital Projects report was provided as an information item.

(Attachment)

FY2026 Budget

Vice President Shropshire stated the need based financial aid at the Federal level should not affect us, but some changes could hurt the state budget and they have to be prepared for this. They will have contingency plans. They are projecting an increase of a little over 1% for enrollments, which is a positive change for us. Previously, they received approval from the Board to borrow \$14M for the Burnell project and to take \$4M from the operating reserves. They may have to come back to the Board about this. If the Bright Act passes, this could help with this project.

ALUMNI AND DEVELOPMENTFY2025/Q3 Alumni and Development Dashboard

Committee Chair Turchon remarked it was a great third quarter. The cumulative total was \$4.1M. Updates include: Giving Day set a new record, received the final distribution from Dawson Estate, received a grant installment of \$635K, and, lastly, a large gift from the Hales. The Foundation's long-term strategy will play a key role in reaching the \$100M endowment goal. President Clark is pleased with the new scholarship in honor of the Hales. As of today, the endowment stands at \$77.8M.

CDO Oliver stated in looking at fourth quarter expectations, as of June 9, they raised \$4.3M with a cumulative total of \$8.6+M. They recently completed the paperwork from Massachusetts on the endowed fund match for \$555,555 to be received shortly. They have made great strides in changing the culture of giving.

Trustee Battaglini recognized the extraordinary work of CDO Oliver and her team; it's truly appreciated.

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Vieira, Turchon) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the FY2025/Q3 Alumni and Development Dashboard Report as recommended by the Alumni and Development Committee and outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated May 28, 2025.
(Attachment)

Foundation Update

The endowment stands at \$76.5M; with a total of \$85M to include foundation property. The performance rate is about 5%. The new property at Park Terrace is coming along. Lastly, the Foundation members met with sister institutions to evaluate their boards – what's working, what isn't.

Alumni Update

The Bridgewater Alumni Association had a good year. They received an historic number of applicants to join their board with 6 new members. Some upcoming events: an evening of thanks, pride cookout, first-ever family day at Buttonwood Park. For new board members, they will introduce a new phase and have mentors for onboarding. They want to increase the engagement of young alumni. They plan to hold a one-year reunion event and they will look at their long-range planning.

UNIVERSITY SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safety Response for Mental Health

Committee Chair Prince commented Dr. Chris Frazer spoke about mental health on campus. In summary, there were 300 transports (yearly) for mental health related concerns. The Wellness Center provided 3,000 hours of therapy. The second Healthy Minds Study showed 80% of students know about services available to them. The BSU police respond as quickly as possible to health events on campus and have the training to identify mental health issues.

(Attachment)

Chief of Staff Leuenberger stated BSU police and Wellness work together in a collaborative way which is very effective and results in positive outcomes.

STUDENT SUCCESS AND DIVERSITY

Male Student Success at BSU

Vice President Gentlewarrior stated the discussion at the committee meeting contextualized what is happening at BSU. Male student success is a crisis from kindergarten up to higher education. BSU has a performance gap; to eliminate the gap, it would take 22 additional students. We know we have to improve, and we know this is within our grasp to change and eliminate the gaps. She shared ongoing work with the male students and emerging practices. There will be an enrollment planning document developed.

(Attachment)

RACIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY

Report on Racial Justice Taskforce Recommendations

Vice President Bell said many of the 75 recommendations from the report have been operationalized. Some results: an ombuds office was established which provides the opportunity for faculty/staff to get advice for areas of concern, etc. Equity work is being done with faculty. The goal with faculty is to let them know from the moment they come on campus, BSU is focused on equity, social justice and inclusion. Also, the Office of Teaching and Learning has 3 faculty fellows, and they offer professional development opportunities,

workshops, hold conferences, book clubs, etc. Their value is that every student should succeed without exception.

(Attachment)

Progress Report from BSU's Racial Equity and Justice Institute Team
Vice President Gentlewarrior said the team is comprised of 50 people. They engage in work all year long using data to set and advance goals. The report provided is a progress update. There is growing sophistication in the team to move beyond thinking about a single course and to think about it from a systemic lens. Equity-mindedness is infused into syllabi. They are setting goals for Latin students, looking at males on campus, work with other divisions on funding from a donor and are thinking about a program for students with lower GPAs. The team is adapting their work to address current challenges nationally. They will continue to seek external funds.

(Attachment)

NOMINATING

Slate of Board Officers – AY2025-2026

Committee Chair Turchon noted the proposed slate of Board Officers are: Michael Taylor, Chairperson; Lisa Battaglino, Vice Chairperson; Carolyn Turchon, Secretary

On motion duly made and seconded (Vieira, Prince) it was that the Board of Trustees approve the Slate of Board Officers for AY2025-2026 as recommended by the Nominating Committee in the attached memorandum from Secretary Turchon dated June 5, 2025.
(Attachment)

VOTED

FOR: Unanimous

CARRIED

OTHER BUSINESS

None

On motion duly made and seconded (Battaglino, Prince) it was that the meeting be adjourned (8:00pm).

VOTED

FOR: Unanimous

CARRIED

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Turchon

Carolyn Turchon
Secretary

Minutes prepared by:
Tracey Keif