



Board of Trustees
Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee
December 18, 2025, 9:45 a.m.
Minutes

Loughman Living Room, Scanlon Hall

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 Tessa Lucey, Vice Chair Michael O'Rourke, Secretary Melissa Alvarado, Trustee Gloria Williams and Board Chair Ali Salehi, ex-officio member.

Members Participating Remotely: Trustee George Gilmer

Also present and participating were Westfield State University President, Dr. Linda Thompson; Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. William Salka; and Director of Belonging, Inclusion, and Learning, Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola.

Committee Chair Tessa Lucey called the meeting to order at 9:48 AM 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 Alvarado seconded by Trustee O'Rourke to approve the minutes of the June 11, 2025, meeting. There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE**, motion passed.

Provost Dr. Bill Salka presented the following to the Committee:

Reorganization of the Office of Belonging, Inclusion, and Learning

- The reorganization involves re-envisioning the office.
- The office is moving from Parenzo Hall to a space in the library previously occupied by the Course Achievement Center (formerly the Care Center).
 - The new space offers private offices for the co-directors and an open area for student gatherings, avoiding designation as a space for specific affinity groups.

Division of Operations

- The operations of belonging are being divided into two parts, each led by a co-director reporting to the provost.
- Azanda Seymour will lead the first part, effective Monday.
 - This role aligns with her work in CSSE overseeing opportunity programs.
 - This director position is campus and student-facing, providing training for faculty and staff.

- Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola, current director, will focus on campus culture and external community engagement.
 - Her role involves embedding DEI efforts across the university.
 - She will assess efforts to ensure Westfield State University is supportive for all students.

Director Responsibilities

- Director 1 (Student Support/Success): Supports students directly and provides training.
- Director 2 (Campus Culture): Assesses DEI efforts and ensures a welcoming environment for all students.

DEI Training and Awareness

- DEI training will be provided for faculty and cabinet members.
- There is an education component, as well as awareness of changing times.
- There is a need to understand that students, staff, and faculty are experiencing anxiety and fear. Conversations are needed to determine how to help students.
- To ensure all members of the community understand current standards and expectations and to address reports of inappropriate comments in the classroom, additional targeted training will be provided. The aim is not to address intentional discrimination, but to meet current societal norms and expectations.

Campus Culture and Assessment

- A campus culture survey for students is being developed to assess DEI efforts.
- Assessment is crucial to understanding the effectiveness of DEI initiatives.
- The two positions are focused on assessment.
- Offices will start doing meaningful assessment, going beyond basic metrics like attendance to include surveys about the event and its impact.

Strategic Vision and KPIs

- The strategic vision position involves assessing the University as a whole.
- Director Spitz-Gassnola will collect and track KPIs across the university.
- Results will be provided to the board. Trustees will have the opportunity to suggest which data will be tracked.
- This is a work in progress. Development of a plan will occur over the winter break, with a plan being finalized and presented to the Board in the spring.

Training and Measurement

- A board member is interested in the training of faculty, staff, and cabinet.
- Timeline is important.
- A campus culture survey is underway that will measure the temperature of the campus community.
 - It's a two-part survey to changes over time.
 - Part one of the two-part survey was completed a few months ago. Part two will be repeated in March.

Data and External Support

- The division of the office into two sections will help speed things up.
- Questions to be answered as the plan is developed:
 - How is the data going to be used?

- Are there plans to use any external supports to help with this work?
- What outcomes are we looking for?
- What does “campus culture improve” mean? What will this look like?

Data-Driven Decision Making

- Leadership articulated a commitment to data-driven decision-making.
- Data, especially from the campus culture survey, will help identify gaps in university efforts.
- Training, potentially through the new faculty center, will address identified gaps.

Restructuring and Focus

- Restructuring the office will facilitate gap identification and broader conversations.
- There is a need for a plan, focusing on data and KPIs, but also qualitative aspects.
- Qualitative data should not be lost when working on programs.
- An update on the plan's progress is expected in early Q2.

Commitment to Inclusion and Survey

- The University remains committed to this work, regardless of external pressures.
- The campus culture survey results are expected by mid-March.
- Initial findings from the first survey round will be available within a month.
- Analysis is underway in collaboration with Melanie Gaudette and IR to ensure proper structuring.

Discussion on Survey and Next Steps

- A deadline was set to provide feedback, a roadmap, and KPIs and benchmarks.
- The method of sharing the survey with external communities has not been discussed, but high-level information on the general consensus from the fall and spring surveys will likely be shared. External communities and method of sharing is yet to be determined.
- Acknowledgment of the anxiety-provoking climate for the university community.

There being no further business,

MOTION made by Trustee Williams, and seconded by Trustee Alvarado, to adjourn. **ROLL CALL VOTE passed motion unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:11 AM.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

- Minutes of June 11, 2025
- JEDI Presentation

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 Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee meeting held on December 18, 2025.

Melissa Alvarado, Secretary

Date