

Bridgewater State University
Board of Trustees Meeting
April 1, 2020
Virtual 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 Jason, Jean, Powers, Oravec, Shropshire, Molife; Acting Vice President 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 conference call meeting on April 1, 2020 with Chairman Durgin presiding.

Chairman Durgin called the meeting to order at 4:25pm.

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Longo, Caulfield) it was to approve the minutes from the Board of Trustees meeting held on February 26, 2020.
(Attachment)

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Denterlein, Murphy) it was to approve the minutes from the Board of Trustees meeting held on March 17, 2020.
(Attachment)

CHAIRMAN'S
REPORT

Chairman Durgin acknowledged the extraordinary efforts and rapid response from President Clark, cabinet members, staff and faculty. All this work is truly appreciated.

PRESIDENT'S
REPORT

President Clark thanked the Trustees for coming together virtually and also thanked the campus community. This has been a remarkable transformation. The faculty have done extraordinary work and have converted all courses to online formats.

FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

Operating Reserves-Emergency Student Credit

President Clark spoke to the emergency student credit. The approximate refund to students is \$9.3M. In moving to an online format and with employees telecommuting, there will be cost savings.

He explained how almost immediately they began looking at expenditures to determine where there could be savings.

Committee Chair Murphy noted there are many layers in reviewing the impact. The difficult issue for the university is where the source of the refund will come from. It is hopeful that the state or federal government will provide financial resources but this is not clear. All universities are moving in the same direction and are on the same path. The larger/longer term issue is the \$9M.

President Clark confirmed all nine state universities are following an identical refund policy except for MMA as they are on a different schedule. UMass is moving in the same direction as well. The community colleges do not have a reimbursement issue. Students were directed to file under consumer protection if they do not receive a reimbursement. The presidents are talking to the Governor, Secretary, Lt. Governor and others to advocate for reimbursement. With the stimulus money from the Federal government, dollars have been set aside for higher education but this is yet to be determined.

Vice President Shropshire noted the \$9.2M in refunds are for housing, meal plans and parking. The other two big pieces for revenue loss is the inability to collect receivables given the economic pressure our students are faced with. This amount may represent \$2.3M in terms of uncollectible receivables. Tuition and fees for summer revenue loss may be \$1.3M. Currently, summer enrollment is 30% behind last year's enrollment. Regarding the aviation program, the students are not flying and they have prepaid for flight time (students may ask to be reimbursed). Money is not coming in for external events. Conversion costs for remote delivery to support programs and telecommuting for our employees is approximately \$300,000. Lastly, the smallest piece is travel plans that were cancelled; not all monies have been recaptured.

Trustee Denterlein inquired about staffing and the possibility of furloughs. President Clark responded a hiring pause was implemented. Student employees will only be paid four weeks.

They are looking to reduce or eliminate hourly employees. There are no plans to move in the direction of furloughs at this point.

Trustee Oliari inquired about courses that cannot be implemented online. President Clark responded 100% of our courses have been converted to online, to include theatre, art, labs, etc.

Vice President Shropshire noted there are labor savings of approximately \$1.4M; trust fund programmatic changes (modifying the dining contract) resulting in \$2.2M savings; small savings in resnet area as students are not using cable and web access; instruction cost savings; Academic Affairs has realized savings; elimination of international travel; savings with the postponement of commencement and other events have been cancelled; spring athletic savings; orientation program savings; student programming costs; savings in utilities; and financial aid savings. The total savings is approximately \$6.8M for the remainder of this fiscal year. Currently there is \$15M in operating reserves. Fortunately, we have this money to draw upon.

Trustee Oliari asked if the aviation students should automatically be reimbursed. Vice President Shropshire noted this program operates differently. Costs roll over from semester to semester and these are rolling flight hours that they purchase. Seniors will be reimbursed if they drop out or don't utilize. The reimbursement amount would be less than \$200,000.

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Murphy, Longo) it was that the Board of Trustees, based on the COVID-19 health emergency, and in support of the distribution of student room/board/parking refunds, approves the immediate utilization of operating reserves in an amount not to exceed \$6.9 million; and also approves the reallocation of current budget savings in the amount of \$2.4 million in order to provide credits in FY20 to students' accounts not to exceed a total of \$9.3 million (inclusive of the \$6.9 million reserve reallocation) resulting from unused residence hall, meal and parking services, the details of which are described in the memorandum from President Clark dated March 26, 2020.
(Attachment)

Residence Hall Rent Schedule – AY2020-21

Vice President Shropshire noted the rent schedule was approved

by the Building Authority and the BHE. A majority of the rates are below a 2% increase. There is a higher demand for the newer residence halls. Trustee Oliari commented Finance should anticipate a sharp decline in the student population for next year.

FY2021 Budget Update

President Clark mentioned there are a lot of moving pieces with: state support, enrollment, residence hall occupancy, and online variables. They are anticipating as much as they can foresee such as: no students in residence halls; only online classes for the beginning of the semester or online classes for the Fall semester. There are many budget scenarios that will be created and they will anticipate as much as they can. It is true that public higher education will be smaller and many of the small privates will be forced to close. They are planning for a worst-case scenario.

Trustee Longo asked how enrollment is going and how many are selecting to live on campus. President Clark responded it is still too early and extensions have been given for students to enroll. Recruitment efforts are still ongoing and admitted students day was converted to online.

Trustee Oliari is concerned about the state helping out as the state has lost money as well. Massachusetts may receive \$200M so there may be a source of funds. The state will want to stimulate the economy.

Vice President Shropshire noted they had a critical judgement meeting of the Cabinet. They tried to determine if BSU will receive money; all agreed, no we will not. This will be a long-term problem and they are planning for this. They are working hard on possible 9C cuts.

Trustee Oliari inquired how BSU police force has been affected and are there savings. President Clark responded everyone who is working from home has to have a telecommuting plan. Overtime has been eliminated. The campus police are working on a rotating basis. The BSU police do see a turn-over rate of about one-third due to being paid a lower salary. Future positions will be frozen.

Dining Services Contract Update

Trustee Murphy noted the bidding process for a new dining contract has been taking place. Final negotiations are underway. Vice President Jason commented this has been a two-year process. She thanked Procurement who led a large task force and kept this

moving. Three organizations submitted proposals with Sodexo coming out on top. She is hopeful negotiations will be complete by April 16 or shortly thereafter so the contract can be brought to the Board for a vote.

Operations Division Update

Vice President Jason spoke about how her division has been responding to capital projects. The current projects will be completed. A medical tent will be set up for subcontractors on campus. FY21 capital projects are on hold. Central Receiving has been working with the state comptroller for year-end report discrepancies. Environmental Health is working with employees. Maintainers are unseen heroes working diligently with Res Life housing. Students who have remained on campus due to hardship are now in Crimson Hall. Dining is available in ECC and is open 7 days a week. The Mailroom has reduced staffing.

President Clark noted the Governor has exempted many construction projects so we are able to move forward. The Mayor had a separate construction ban which doesn't affect the Town of Bridgewater. Safety guidelines have been established and these are being followed.

UNIVERSITY SAFETY AND SECURITY

COVID-19 Update

Committee Chair Caulfield noted, as Trustees, they have been in constant contact with President Clark. The consensus is that they appreciate his transparency and kindness.

President Clark noted the Board meet on March 17 and updates have been provided since that point in time. They continue to work on a daily basis with many colleagues in higher education and they are in sync with the rest of the state. As of today, there are 6 reported cases amongst our students. All are at home in isolation. They have reached out to those students and offered assistance in any way possible. The Pandemic Response Committee meets every morning. There are 7 subgroups that were established to address various issues and to keep the university moving forward.

Provost Ismaili noted the faculty have put in an incredible effort to bring courses online. He appreciates how they are supporting each other and our students. Students are talking about the heroic efforts of our faculty. General issues they have dealt with are: continuing studies and the teaching and technology center. They

have provided all the tools, training and guidance to make this quick transition. As they have gone through this period, they have addressed policy questions and operational questions. Provost Ismaili acknowledged the hard work of Registrar Joe Wolk and Dean of Undergraduate Studies Rita Miller. Dr. Miller oversees the Academic Achievement Center. The AAC has completely converted to virtual service and are working with all students with various needs to make sure they are being served.

They are advancing a proposal to give students an opportunity to opt into a pass / no pass rating system once they receive their grades. The proposal has gone to the Governance Committee. This is a key issue students and faculty have argued for.

They are providing guidance to faculty regarding advising in an online format and will allow for a greater period of advising. With the many obstacles they are facing, the work of this institution continues. They are working on strategic enrollment. Photonics was approved and will be sent to the BHE for approval. BSU wants to ensure all students get to the finish line.

President Clark spoke to staffing and telecommuting. While there are staff working from home, they are truly working from home and are busy. There have been numerous efforts to keep essential staff working on campus safe and they are hopeful to further reduce the number of staff on campus. He thanked Vice President Powers for her efforts. Regarding Residence staff, over the past 10 days, they have moved out about 99.6% of our students. This was a remarkable effort. Students' belongings will be put in storage if they couldn't make it to campus to move out. 107 students are currently on campus. They have been encouraged to hold aside some residence hall space for potential emergencies at the state level. MEMA may ask for space for people diagnosed with COVID who need to be quarantined. They are already preparing for this. The apartments will be cleaned for first responders from the Town of Bridgewater who do not want to bring this exposure home. There are 20 people at the prison who have been exposed.

President Clark noted another communication will be sent out tomorrow to talk about Summer Session I, which will be fully online. All events have been cancelled through the summer to include the Mandela Fellows. His team has been tremendous and he is truly grateful to all in keeping the university running.

Dr. Irina Seceleanu participated in the call on behalf of the MSCA and commented on the tremendous efforts by faculty to move classes online. They appreciate the tremendous support to make this happen.

Chairman Durgin noted the Board will meet again virtually on April 16 for a Board meeting. He thanked President Clark and Vice President Shropshire for the detailed information provided. He is confident the university is moving in the right direction.

On motion duly made and seconded (Denterlein, MacCormack) it was that the meeting be adjourned (5:40pm).

VOTED

FOR: Unanimous

CARRIED

Respectfully submitted,

Davede Alexander

Davede Alexander
Secretary

Minutes prepared by:
Tracey Keif