

Bridgewater State University
Board of Trustees Meeting
March 17, 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

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 March 17, 2020 with Chairman Durgin presiding.

Chairman Durgin called the meeting to order at 4:05pm.
The purpose of this meeting was to provide an update on effects of the COVID-19 virus on campus.

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Caulfield, MacCormack) it was to defer the approval of the minutes from the Board meeting held on February 26, 2020.

President Clark provided an overview of where BSU is currently at and next steps as it relates to COVID-19. He thanked everyone for coming together and following protocols. They put together a pandemic response and planning committee which meets every day virtually at 9:00am. The following smaller groups have been formed to continue the work and to keep moving forward: Academic Continuity; Business Continuity and Inter-governmental Coordination; Commencement/events; Communications; Facilities/dining; Health Response; Refund and Expense Mitigation; Resident Halls; Staffing/telecommuting.

He is working closely with other state universities, the state, the Department of Public Health, the Town's Board of Health and Town Manager. There are no reported cases on campus,

however, there are reported cases in Plymouth county. The Governor provided guidance on Sunday and they pivoted immediately. All communications from the president have been provided to the Board. The Governor called upon all public and private institutions to move classes online and for state institutions to move to essential staff only. The Centers for Disease Control provided suggestions in regard to cleaning, and BSU has been following this through by using U.S. environmentally approved cleaning products.

We want to make sure all residence halls stay open for those who are at risk and to ensure they are cared for. About 125 students fall under this category. The Wellness Center has been working on any issues from employees about possible exposures. Dr. Chris Frazer has been very pleased with the health responses and coordination efforts. The college presidents speak every day. Everyone is moving in sync which is important.

Academic Continuity - the provost has done an exceptional job with his team to move faculty to an online format. Provost Ismaili noted over the past three weeks they have been preparing for online classes. They are starting to help faculty transition from face-to-face educational experience to online teaching. A survey was provided to all faculty to provide an opportunity to learn clearly what their needs are so we can tailor resources according to their wishes. Based on the survey results, they have created a fully online virtual environment where faculty can get technology enabled tools. A total of 171 faculty signed up for training. The division has identified online mentors who can assist their peers in this transition. Eight newly hired faculty mentors have been brought on. A webinar was held today with 135 faculty participants. He has not received one complaint. The deans, faculty and librarians are all working together.

President Clark said the initial email noted we were moving online for a couple of weeks. The decision was made to be online for the remainder of the semester per recommendation from the state. This creates a need for students to move out of the residence halls. We are giving our students time to move out and will honor the 10-person limit. With this, refunds will need to be given for housing and dining. BSU is working with the state to develop a policy for refunds. Emergency funding bills are being created and we are hopeful the state will assist. \$11M is the estimated expense for reimbursing students.

Telecommuting for employees. Essential personnel have been defined. An internal policy was identified and Vice President Powers has implemented this. Employees have been provided information about telecommuting as well as a work plan to allow consideration of job responsibilities that can be conducted from remote locations. Directors and supervisors are collaborating with employees to put together plans to support our students. Administrative business can continue. HR team is currently reaching out to directors and supervisors to provide assistance in trying to help them be creative with various services employees can provide from their home location. Some offices need to have coverage and employees will alternate coming into the office one or two days a week. IT will provide employees with technological services and provide loaner laptops or other devices. They will also need to provide access to our systems. The partnership has been excellent and they are responding to the needs of the

employees. They have been in conversation with the union leadership and leadership has given a lot of flexibility and support with this situation.

President Clark stated the workforce on campus has been reduced by 90%. They honor the social distancing guidelines while people are on campus. There have been about ten communications within the past week. A COVID-19 website has been established. An email address has been created for those who want to ask questions. In regard to facilities and dining, Vice President Jason and staff have done a tremendous job in cleaning the campus. The dining on campus is considered as restaurants; therefore, food is being prepackaged for employees or students as takeout. Regarding events, essentially every event has been cancelled over the next few weeks. Buildings are open but the general public is not allowed on campus due to guidelines. While commencement ceremonies have been cancelled at some institutions, BSU is looking into the possibility of holding a ceremony in the late summer/early fall. The business of the university is continuing as we are focusing on summer classes and looking to the fall. The impact is deeply uncertain.

Chairman Durgin commented the Board is very proud of the actions taken over the past couple of weeks. Administration has stayed on top of this and moved quickly.

Trustee Denterlein welcomed hearing what was not going well so the Board has an idea of what challenges lie ahead. The Board is here to help and support in any way. President Clark responded once they cross over to online, they will have to determine what this will mean to the institution in terms of enrollment. The unknown is difficult. Trustee Oliari inquired about food savings and what the total liability will be to expense savings. Residence hall costs could see some savings due to not needing security staff. There will be some savings with our food service as well. Vice President Shropshire is hopeful BSU will receive funds from the state. There is currently a hiring freeze. They are watching summer enrollment and registrations for the fall which are now beginning. Our faculty will have the capability for online classes which is a benefit for future enrollment.

Vice President Shropshire stated the residence halls are a big piece of cost. Vice President Jason is working with Sodexo and there will be savings.

Trustee MacCormack understands the complexity of giving faculty one week to change to online teaching – congratulations! It's impossible to know the impact this will have on the future. Make sure there are frequent conversations with the Board so we are well informed. Chairman Durgin asked Trustees to hold April 1 and April 16 on their calendar for a teleconference.

Trustee Longo inquired about counseling for students. The Wellness Center has done a remarkable job and staff have been available and ready to serve. The Academic Achievement Center will become virtual. The Disability Resource office is available as well. This is challenging. There is an uptick in people having anxiety, etc. Vice President Oravec noted his team is making sure they have the skillset of telehealth.

Trustee Murphy inquired about residence hall finance/bond payment timing. Vice President Shropshire noted the building authority bills at the beginning of each semester; the Spring semester payment has been paid. The building authority is guaranteed to receive this money and they have the right to take our appropriation if not paid. Trustee Murphy asked if anything requires a vote by the Board. President Clark responded that he has spoken with the university attorneys and thus far, no. A refund to students with no state support would require a vote as they would have to access the reserves.

Chairman Durgin said we have responsibilities to approve various actions through normal Board business and these will be brought to the teleconference meetings. Future meetings will have action items embedded in them.

Chairman Durgin noted the Board will go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a sensitive personnel matter. No votes will be taken during Executive Session and the meeting will reconvene in open session at its conclusion. He noted the following staff were present for the Executive Session: President Clark, Chief of Staff Leuenberger, Vice President Powers and Tracey Keif.

VOTED On motion duly made and seconded (Longo, MacCormack) it was
FOR: Unanimous to go into Executive Session for the purpose of a sensitive personnel
CARRIED matter.

Chairman Durgin polled the members of the Board to go into Executive Session and confirmed that all on the conference call were in a private location:

Trustee MacCormack – yes	Trustee Benson – yes	Trustee Longo - yes
Trustee Caulfield – yes	Trustee Denterlein – yes	Trustee Turchon - yes
Trustee Murphy – yes	Trustee Oliari – yes	Trustee Alexander – yes
Trustee Durgin - yes		

VOTED On motion duly made and seconded (Longo, MacCormack) it was
FOR: Unanimous to come out of Executive Session.
CARRIED

Trustee MacCormack – yes	Trustee Benson – yes	Trustee Longo - yes
Trustee Caulfield – yes	Trustee Denterlein – yes	Trustee Turchon - yes
Trustee Murphy – yes	Trustee Oliari – yes	Trustee Alexander – yes
Trustee Durgin - yes		

Chairman Durgin thanked everyone for participating in the conference meeting. Details will be sent soon regarding the meeting on April 1, 2020.

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Denterlein, MacCormack) it was that the meeting be adjourned (5:25pm).

Respectfully submitted,

Davede Alexander
Secretary

Minutes prepared by:
Tracey Keif