

Bridgewater State University  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
December 14, 2023  
6:30pm  
Dunn Conference Room  
Hybrid

MEMBERS PRESENT: Trustees Alexander (Virtual), Allen, Battaglino, Caulfield (Virtual), Giles, Longo, Taylor, MacCormack, Turchon, and Prince

MEMBERS ABSENT: Trustee Oliari

ALSO PRESENT: President Clark; EVP and Provost Ismaili; Chief of Staff Leuenberger; Vice Presidents Bell, Gentlewarrior, Jason, Jean, Oravec, Powers, Shropshire, Zuromski; CDO Oliver; Special 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 Governor Baker, having been complied with, and a quorum of the Board present, the Board of Trustees held a meeting on December 14, 2023 with Chairperson MacCormack presiding.

Chairperson MacCormack called the meeting to order at 6:35pm. She 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 Longo-yes, Trustee Caulfield-yes, Trustee Allen-yes, Trustee Giles-yes, Trustee Taylor-yes, Trustee Turchon-yes, Trustee Alexander-yes, Trustee Prince-yes, Trustee Battaglino-yes, Trustee MacCormack-yes, it was 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 (Taylor, Longo) it was to approve the minutes from the Board of Trustees meeting held on October 19, 2023.  
(Attachment)

VOTED  
FOR: Unanimous  
CARRIED

**Chairperson's  
Report**

Chair MacCormack expressed her gratitude to the faculty and staff in serving BSU students effectively and appreciates the campuswide commitment to equity. Lastly, she acknowledged the passing of former trustee John Walsh and offered a moment of silence in his honor.

Student Trustee Update

Trustee Allen stated the University is supportive of the ongoing issues around the world. He called for a moment of silence to honor the 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sandy Hook. The University is pushing for a safer campus and limiting sexual assaults, and students are starting to speak out on things they see. Students are happy with the support of jobs on campus. In regard to mental health, students are coming together and helping each other and noted BSU offers great resources.

**President's Report**

President Clark noted Rita Miller was celebrated at the Board dinner receiving the title of Dean Emerita. He also recognized Dr. Joe Oravec, Vice President for Student Life, who will retire at the end of this month. During V.P. Oravec's entire time at BSU, it was always about his team –advocating for them and recognizing their accomplishments - V.P. Oravec was here for the students and they know who he is. President Clark is very grateful for his service, care and compassion.

## Other Updates:

- \*Salary increases for employees have finally been funded and HR is diligently processing.
- \*Bridgewater Rising – Secretary of Education Pat Tutwiler and Commissioner Noe Ortega were recently on campus. They are both interested in BSU's equity work.
- \*Vice President Gentlewarrior and Chair MacCormack presented at the NECHE annual meeting on racial justice and equity work.
- \*BSU hosted a joint legislative hearing.
- \*The anonymous donor sent another \$300K to assist in continuing our work with racial justice and equity.
- \*The Lt. Governor leaned in with BSU's EXCEL academy. There is a partnership with South Shore Vocational Technical School who is putting autistic students to work.
- \*Hosted leader of TechNet and will hold an symposium here in the future.
- \*Received BHE approval for the undergraduate cybersecurity program.
- \*Working to rebuild community on campus – a staff volleyball tournament was held and a holiday extravaganza will be held.

Presentation: BSU Engagement-Gardner Institute

Sr. Associate Provost Michael Young provided an overview of the 5-year engagement with the Gardner Institute. Through BSU's participation in the Gardner Institute's *Transforming the Foundational Postsecondary Experience* project, BSU can intentionally and strategically review and align the many ongoing efforts in support of student success and design a path for BSU students' foundational years while at BSU – a path that is ready for our students today and for the students of tomorrow.

BSU intends to leverage the expertise of the Gardner Institute team and partner institutions to intentionally adapt the foundational BSU experience into a distinctive experience that will frame our students' ability to build meaningful connections with others, contribute to their communities, and develop their identities as lifelong learners. In considering this project, a few staff participated in a leadership academy and worked from July until now to get the project jump started. (Attachment)

ACTION/  
INFORMATION  
ITEMS

## ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

### Sabbatical Leave Requests

Committee Chair Taylor noted there were 42 leave requests.

VOTED  
FOR: Unanimous  
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Taylor, Turchon) it was that the Board of Trustees accepts the Sabbatical Leave Requests as recommended by the Academic and Student Affairs Committee and described in the memorandum from President Clark dated October 12, 2023.

(Attachment)

### Letter of Intent for a B.A. Degree for Individualized Studies

Provost Ismaili noted the program is offered through the College of Continuing Studies and is designed for students with a certain number of credits who are looking for a self-designed major. They can pursue programs that appeal to them to complete their degree. BSU has a focus on degree-completion and supporting students where they are.

VOTED  
FOR: Unanimous  
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Taylor, Prince) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the submission of a Letter of Intent for a B.S. degree in Individualized Studies to the Department of Higher Education as recommended by the Academic and Student Affairs Committee and described in the memorandum from President Clark dated November 22, 2023.

(Attachment)

### University Fact Sheet, Five-Year Trends

The Fact Sheet was provided as an information item.

(Attachment)

## FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

### FY2024/Q1 Trust Funds Report

Committee Chair Longo stated the Trust Funds are tracking well.

VOTED

FOR: Unanimous

CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Longo, Prince) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the FY2024/Q1 Trust Funds Report as recommended by the Finance and Operations Committee and outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated November 22, 2023.

(Attachment)

Meal Plan Rates for AY2024-25

Committee Chair Longo stated the meal plan rates are based on CPI, however, BSU negotiated a rate.

VOTED

FOR: Unanimous

CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Longo, Battaglino) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the Meal Plan Rates for AY2024-25 as recommended by the Finance and Operations Committee and outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated November 22, 2023.

(Attachment)

FY2024/Q1 Budget Report

Committee Chair Longo stated the budget is going well. The number of credits related to courses being taken have increased and expenses are as expected.

(Attachment)

FY2024/Q1 Contracts Report

The quarterly contracts report was brought as an information item.

(Attachment)

Financial Aid Report

Committee Chair Longo noted AVP Biechler provided a thorough report on financial aid at the committee meeting. \$92M has been disbursed to BSU students. The program for undocumented students has expanded to assist students. The average debt for BSU graduated students is \$25K. \$3.2M is invested in student employment.

(Attachment)

Capital Projects Update

Vice President Jason briefly reviewed the projects. Update to the report: the bids for the Library A.C. project came in at \$1.7M which was funded with non-local funds.

(Attachment)

**STUDENT SUCCESS AND DIVERSITY**Graduation and Retention Data

Committee Chair Caulfield stated Amanda Colligan, executive director for IR, presented at the committee meeting. She provided a thoughtful and thorough presentation. Graduation rates for first-time full time are trending above our peers, and retention of first-time full time is

outperforming our peers. Students of color and LGBTQ have experienced an increase in retention as well.

(Attachment)

#### Student Navigators at Bridgewater State University-Update

Committee Chair Caulfield reported a thorough presentation was provided at the committee meeting regarding the student navigators' initiative which focuses on retention. Support is provided for students at risk for non-persistence. The navigators are located across the campus, speak several languages, provide resources to students, etc., which has resulted in an improvement in retention.

(Attachment)

### **UNIVERSITY SAFETY AND SECURITY**

#### Equal Opportunity/Title IX Data

Committee Chair Caulfield noted Chris McMillan, executive director for Equal Opportunity, provided a report to the committee and explained the responsibilities of his office. Statistics are trending consistently; formal investigations have decreased. There are improvements in his office due to AI technology; working on improvements for students who are parenting/pregnant; and looking at a partnership with UMass Law School for student interns.

(Attachment)

#### Clery Report

The Clery Report was provided as an information item. The mandatory report tracks Federal statistics. BSU experienced an average year.

(Attachment)

#### Update on Community Outreach Efforts

Committee Chair Caulfield noted Assistant Chief of Police Froio reviewed BSU PD outreach efforts at the meeting. Last year, there were 279 outreach programs; this year they have reached 194 with a goal to hit 300. They provide basic self-defense classes, sexual assault/domestic violence awareness, child seat safety inspections, hold barbecues, provide haircuts, involved with Dress for Success, and use K9 Mikey and K9 Zach to connect with students.

(Attachment)

### **ALUMNI AND DEVELOPMENT**

#### FY2024/Q1 Alumni and Development Dashboard Report

Committee Chair Turchon stated as of September 30, assets were valued at \$58M and the combined market value for the Foundation and Alumni Association is at \$66.3M. Total commitments stand at \$1.98M and the Feed a Bear campaign raised \$8K to assist students with food insecurity.

President Clark noted Isabelle Dawson left a bequest to BSU upon her recent passing. Her estate is valued between \$3-5M. She was a remarkable woman. Per her request, dollars will go to the College of Education to support teacher prep candidates.

CDO Oliver mentioned the goal for end of calendar year is \$3.6M. An application was submitted for the Massachusetts state endowment match.

VOTED  
FOR: Unanimous  
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Turchon, Longo) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the FY2023/Q1 Alumni and Development Dashboard Report as recommended by the Alumni and Development Committee and outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated November 12, 2023.  
(Attachment)

#### Foundation Update

The investment performance is strong. The Investment Committee is reviewing its policy and also looking at private investment firms.

#### Alumni Update

Homecoming was successful. The annual meeting was held during Homecoming. Other updates: young alumni focus group will be held in January; the BAA is in the process of selecting a new alumni trustee; BAA will select a new BAA president for next year; and 275 students received clothing from Dress for Success.

### **HONARARY DEGREE**

#### Honorary Degree Recipient for Graduate Commencement-May 2024 (Karen Spilka)

VOTED  
FOR: Unanimous  
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Battaglino, Prince) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the recommendation to award an Honorary Degree of Public Service to Karen Spilka at the University's 2024 Graduate Commencement Convocation as outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated December 7, 2023.  
(Attachment)

#### Honorary Degree Recipient for Undergraduate Commencement-May 2024 (Travis Adkins-Afternoon)

VOTED  
FOR: Unanimous  
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Battaglino, Prince) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the recommendation to award an Honorary Degree of Public Service to Travis Adkins at the University's 2024 Undergraduate Commencement Convocation as

outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated December 7, 2023.

(Attachment)

Honorary Degree Recipient for Undergraduate Commencement-May 2024 (Jay Ash - Morning)

VOTED  
FOR: Unanimous  
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Battaglino, Turchon) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the recommendation to award an Honorary Degree to Jay Ash at the University's 2024 Undergraduate Commencement Convocation as outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated December 7, 2023.

(Attachment)

Distinguished Service Award Recipient for Undergraduate Commencement-May 2024 (Evelyn DeLutis/Gloria Moran- Afternoon)

VOTED  
FOR: Unanimous  
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Battaglino, Taylor) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the recommendation to award a Distinguished Service Award to Evelyn DeLutis and Gloria Moran at the University's 2024 Undergraduate Commencement Convocation as outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated December 7, 2023.

(Attachment)

Distinguished Service Award Recipient for Undergraduate Commencement-May 2024 (Gloria Stanton-Morning)

VOTED  
FOR: Unanimous  
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Battaglino, Prince) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the recommendation to award a Distinguished Service Award to Gloria Stanton at the University's 2024 Undergraduate Commencement Convocation as outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated December 7, 2023.

(Attachment)

**AD HOC ENROLLMENT/MARKETING COMMITTEE**

Fall 2024 Admissions Funnels

Committee Chair Alexander stated despite what is happening demographically with admissions, there is hope for BSU due to an increase in inquiries and applications.

(Attachment)

Vice President Jean noted the Enrollment Management Committee consists of 7 members from the campus community. They are working on the development of a revised strategic enrollment plan, development of multiple action plans which are directed at student populations and different target markets.

Fall admission numbers are holding steady; applications are up 10.9% for first year undergrad; graduate applications are up by about 8% for the fall; numbers are remaining steady.

Financial Aid Update (Merit, FAFSA, Mass Grant Plus)

Committee Chair Alexander noted AVP Biechler provided an update at the committee meeting and extensive conversation took place.

Search and Application Campaigns

This will be discussed at the next meeting.

**EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

External Relations Updates (Legislative, Municipal, Employer Outreach)

Committee Chair Battaglino stated Special Advisor DeMacedo provided an update on legislative outreach, working with local municipalities and employers, as well as a focus on gateway communities. The University is working with CyberTrust on cybersecurity and providing services to local municipalities using our students for hands-on experience. He took BSU's concepts to Beacon Hill/Capital Hill and secured \$2M for the cybersecurity program.

Public Relations Update

Committee Chair Battaglino noted Vice President Jean spoke about the work of his division for advertising, promoting the university, social media, maintaining websites, etc. In ten years, they have gone from 15 media outlets to now 45.

**EXECUTIVE**

Approval of Draft Institutional Strategic Plan 2.0 (V19)

President Clark stated this sets the plan for BSU for the next five years. He and Chief of Staff Leuenberger thanked the entire campus community for their input. New guidance was received from the BHE which was incorporated and BSU will be the first to submit its next plan to the DHE/BHE for their review. Once approval is received by the DHE, it will be brought back to the full Board for final approval/adoption. Chair MacCormack commented BSU is fortunate to have Chief of Staff Leuenberger who is leading this effort.

On motion duly made and seconded (Longo, Taylor) it was that the Board of Trustees accepts and approves submittal of Bridgewater State University's Draft Institutional Strategic Plan 2.0 (V19) to the Department of Higher Education as recommended by the Executive Committee.

VOTED

FOR: Unanimous

CARRIED



President's Expenses and Upcoming Travel

The president's expense report was brought as an information item. (Attachment)

**PRESIDENTIAL REVIEW AND COMPENSATION**Acceptance of the Presidential 360 Review Report

Chair MacCormack stated this was the first time a 360 review was conducted at BSU. She is grateful to the Presidential Review Committee for their time. The committee received good feedback from the campus community and external constituents and they enjoyed having the opportunity to speak with the staff. The Board is pleased to say it was an extraordinary positive review. The President's communication and transparency is well understood and appreciated. There is agreement with the priorities that have been set: strategic plan, student success, racial justice and equity commitment, managing enrollment and the fostering of innovation.

A few recommendations for improvements: work on understanding the new normal, provide further information on resources and staffing, spend more time with various groups on campus, continue the work on racial equity and justice. Chair MacCormack will meet with the Commissioner to share and discuss the report.

VOTED

FOR: Unanimous

CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Giles, Prince) it was that the Board of Trustees accepts and approves the final report of the Presidential 360 Review of President Frederick W. Clark, Jr. and the approval of a 5% retention adjustment effective January 30, 2024 as recommended by the Presidential Review and Compensation Committee.

OTHER  
BUSINESS

None

VOTED

FOR: Unanimous

CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Giles, Longo) it was that the meeting be adjourned (8:05 pm).

Respectfully submitted,

*Scott Longo*

Scott Longo  
Secretary

Minutes prepared by:  
Tracey Keif