

Bridgewater State University  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
September 24, 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 Gentlewarrior, Jason, Jean, Powers, Oravec, Shropshire, Moline, 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 September 24, 2020 with Chairman Durgin presiding.

Chairman Durgin called the meeting to order at 4:05pm.

VOTED  
FOR: Unanimous  
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Turchon, Alexander) it was to approve the minutes from the Board of Trustees meeting held on August 27, 2020.  
(Attachment)

**Chairman's  
Message**

Chairman Durgin welcomed everyone. He has spoken with Trustee Benson and a few students and is very pleased with their enthusiasm and commitment. He asked Trustee Alexander to provide an update for the Racial Justice Task Force. Trustee Alexander noted they have collected a lot of data and feedback from the campus community which is used to inform their thoughts on how to explore racial justice within the university system. They intend to move as fast as possible. Trustee Benson provided an update on feedback from fellow students regarding the opening. The residence students are starting to get in the swing of things. In general, students are trying to adapt and are complying with the rules/policies and doing their best to keep safe. SGA is holding their fall election soon to fill missing seats. SGA will partner with the Martin Richard Institute on voter registration for November.

**President's  
Report**

President Clark stated they have commenced the fall semester which was a successful start. Forty percent of the residence halls are occupied with 1,307 students. He thanked faculty, staff and students for a successful launch. The COP, BHE and MSCA have come to a one-year agreement on the faculty contract. The contract doesn't have financial support though. All acknowledged the current health and safety of faculty and students is important. President Clark noted he was invited to a meeting with the Governor (a meeting with 6 presidents representing 2 each from community colleges, state universities and UMass). The Governor is interested in hearing how things are going. He informed the Governor that our testing and tracing are working very well. President Clark is very grateful to our students as they understand the importance of being responsible. Enrollment is down 3.6%. Currently, there are 10,633 students enrolled. Comparatively we are doing very well. Sister institutions are down 7-10%. Demographic challenges – there is a gravitation for students to be together. The Chronicle posted an article where five hundred students were surveyed – 72% prefer to be in person; 25% hybrid; 2% online. Budget wise, they will have to lean into reserves. They will pay attention to residence hall occupancy and the state budget as they do not know what the reduction will be yet. They have asked for level funding to continue to serve our students. He and his team are still moving forward with determination for our programs and retention efforts. Campus projects are moving forward. External programs taking place are: Plymouth 400, where BSU will host a virtual indigenous history conference; and also, a two-year project which resulted in the creation of the Massachusetts Chronicles. Indigenous Peoples day will be recognized on Columbus Day.

Vice President Jean spoke about Massachusetts Chronicles and the Indigenous Conference. Both have been deeply collaborative efforts within the university and several external organizations. Both are designed to enrich our understanding of history through an inclusive effort. And both are intended to be lasting legacies of the Plymouth 400 commemoration. The Massachusetts Chronicles was sent to 1,854 schools across the Commonwealth. A website was created which lives on the BSU site. Due to the extraordinary work of Dr. Joyce Rain Anderson and Linda Coombs, the conference will be presenting virtually over 9 days in October and November. Speakers and presenters will be native and non-native educators. There is a website for the conference detailing all the sessions available, the panelists and their bios. NBC10 is working on a major story on Mass Chronicles which will air next week. They will cover the conference as well.

Provost Ismaili noted a micro credential is available to any educator who uses the Mass Chronicles. There is extraordinary work across

the University in building the website, etc. Department of History, Maggie Lowe, was very helpful in thinking through the material.

**ACTION/  
INFORMATION  
ITEMS**

Chairman Durgin noted the roll call vote is implicit on all unanimous votes for this meeting. If the vote is not unanimous, a roll call will take place.

President's Review for AY2019-2020

Chairman Durgin noted the president's evaluation was in three parts: president's self-assessment, Board letter composed in April to the president and University community in support of the COVID actions; and then the Board's assessment for President Clark. The Board appreciates his leadership in this uncharted territory. President Clark continues to exceed expectations.

VOTED  
FOR: Unanimous  
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (MacCormack, Longo) it was that the Board of Trustees approves President Clark's Self-Assessment and Chairman Durgin's evaluation letter dated September 10, 2020 for the 2019-2020 academic year.  
(Attachment)

Annual Report of Grants and Sponsored Projects

President Clark thanked the staff in Grants and Sponsored Projects for their work this past year. Highlight of the report: receipt of \$9.2M for the Cares Act from the federal government. Tremendous work by the staff. Provost Ismaili commented it is a campus-wide effort to secure funds for initiatives and programs. He thanked Mia Zoino and her staff as well as Michael Young who oversees this division. Highlights: requested approximately \$5.5M in funding with \$1.7M still pending. BSU received \$3M in funding in FY20; 20% came from federal funding, 75% from the state and the remaining from private. They experienced a 62% success rate which is terrific. Abstracts of all proposals were shared.

VOTED  
FOR: Unanimous  
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (MacCormack, Caulfield) it was that the Board of Trustees accepts the Annual Report of Grants and Sponsored Projects for the year beginning July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020 as recommended and described in the memorandum from President Clark dated September 18, 2020.  
(Attachment)

Faculty and Librarian Hiring Report

President Clark said the report is good news on multiple fronts. When the pandemic hit, there was a hiring freeze except for faculty hiring that was already in the pipeline. Teaching and learning is the heart of the institution.

Provost Ismaili noted there were 23 new hires; 19 tenure track and 4 one-year appointments. BSU continues to attract very talented faculty. They were able to enhance faculty of color with the hiring of 7 faculty. Eleven of the 19 hired were women. Full-time faculty have filled in for the lack of part-time faculty. He is appreciative of the faculty who are navigating through this difficult time.

(Attachment)

#### Renaming of the Center for Multicultural Affairs

President Clark was pleased to bring forward this recommendation. He has felt for a long time that the center should be renamed. With the passing of Paul Gaines, it sparked this idea. Sarah Lewis was our very first African American student. It was unusual that she attended this college. She was one of only 17 students to graduate in 1869. She is a person of honor and pleased to put her name forward. When Paul Gaines came to BSU, there were 7 students of color. After 28 years of service, there were 400 students of color. Today our rate is at 25%. BSU is built on a foundation established by Mr. Gaines. Earlier this week, President Clark met with Paul's family on a call and they blessed this naming. In terms of a legacy, BSU wants to do more. With the unveiling, they will announce a fundraiser which has already netted \$650,000; \$350,000 will be for Gaines scholarships to students of color from gateway cities who want to teach. Trustee Murphy has led with a leadership gift and thanked him for his support.

On motion duly made and seconded (MacCormack, Denterlein) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the recommendation to rename the Center for Multicultural Affairs to the Lewis and Gaines Center for Inclusion and Equity (LGCIE) as outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated September 18, 2020.

(Attachment)

#### FY2020/Q4 Alumni and Development Dashboard Report

Ms. Oliver, Interim CDO, noted the staff in her division are working hard. Her charge was to build a team and to build a pipeline. The staff who has been doing this work are in place and are focused on achieving the goal set by President Clark. Their strategies have started to pay dividends. The campaign is about all of us – staff, faculty, administration, Board, Foundation Board, etc. She feels blessed and honored to be at BSU. They exceeded last year's Q4 goal despite COVID. The next piece is the plan which they are currently working on. She and her team will keep going. Currently, they are \$100,000 ahead of last year's Q1.

Chairman Durgin asked what is the biggest obstacle? Ms. Oliver explained they have had to shift their event-based plans to virtual and to increase use of social media which is critically important. Vice President Gentlewarrior and Trustee MacCormack recently joined in a

VOTED

FOR: Unanimous

CARRIED

virtual call with founding donors which went very well. They are being innovative and creative. Approximately 60 alumni are dialing in to engage. She and her staff are discovering what their passions are. They are also collaborating with the colleges and divisions on campus.

Trustee Caulfield asked Ms. Oliver to talk about the campaign. Ms. Oliver explained it is ongoing; they are building a pipeline and they know who the campaign leads are and are developing a plan. The messaging, positioning and collaborative development started last year. Vice President Jean and his staff are working on naming options. A website continues to be built and will be ready soon.

She also explained that in order to go public, it's important to raise 50-60% of the \$100M goal. There will be a campaign plan which they are currently working on. She is hopeful to be public in 2022.

President Clark commented Ms. Bair resigned as CDO and he thanked Ms. Oliver for stepping in. Her energy and passion is appreciated.

On motion duly made and seconded (Turchon, Denterlein) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the FY2020/Q4 Alumni and Development Dashboard Report as outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated September 18, 2020.  
(Attachment)

VOTED  
FOR: Unanimous  
CARRIED

#### Fall Semester Return Update

President Clark stated they have been focused on a safe return for September. Chief of Staff Leuenberger provided an update. She thanked students and the community for keeping safe and adhering to BSU's policies. Currently, there is only one student in isolation. Food service, Operations and Academic Affairs has been helpful in transitioning with our students. Athletics has moved forward into phase 2. They are currently working on flu shots for the campus community as all residential students need to be vaccinated, except for those with a medical condition or religious belief. A partnership with CVS has been established to administer the vaccine. Their health professionals will be on campus October 7-9. BSU has 280 flu shots available through the Wellness Center. Testing and flu shots are free of charge to our students (most students are covered through their insurance or BSU has some funding available). By December 31, 2020, all students have to be vaccinated according to the state mandate. They are preparing for the spring and talking about classrooms, residence halls, etc. They are also exploring other methodologies with Broad to see what testing methods may be available for the spring semester.

Trustee Alexander inquired about student and staff morale given the circumstances that we are in and how we engage with each other; we have lost the ways to naturally connect. From a student, staff and

leadership perspective, it will be helpful to know how people are feeling. President Clark responded cabinet recently had this discussion. Academic Affairs has reached out to faculty. There will be a campus-wide effort to ask how it's going; how can we be more supportive. When people feel alone, depressed, anxious, it's important to know this and see what we can do to help.

#### FY21 Budget Update

Trustee Murphy noted at the last meeting they talked about the many adjustments that have been made going into the fiscal year. Operations, to date, is within their goal; just some minor changes. The complication is that there is still no state appropriation for the current fiscal year. At the next meeting, the plan is for the Board to approve the budget. All in all things are going well.

Vice President Shropshire noted they budgeted for 5% enrollment decline; however, enrollment is only down 3.6% which is better than projected. They will be conservative going forward. Where the state appropriation is uncertain, they will be conservative on projections. Residence halls are at 44% occupancy; budgeted at 45%. They will build in more protection with their projection for the spring. With the hiring pause, there is excess salary savings. He appreciated Vice President Molife for being the first division to submit \$73,000 in additional savings. There is a total of \$1M in savings from the divisions. \$500,000 will be allocated for spring COVID-19 testing as it is important to have a good testing protocol. There was no provision for athletics; however, a barebones financial budget for a spring athletic schedule was added.

Trustee MacCormack commended Vice President Shropshire and his team for their work. Many institutions are in a precarious position and they don't all have a financial plan or strategy.

Vice President Shropshire noted a survey of all publics is due on the 30<sup>th</sup>. The state is asking for cash on hand. We have been diligent about building our reserves.

Vice President Shropshire was happy to announce BSU has received the CAFR award for the 12<sup>th</sup> year in a row. Government Finance Officers Association offers an award for a comprehensive annual financial report. This can be found on BSU's website. CAFR is judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program in the spirit of self-disclosure. This is the highest form of recognition and significant accomplishment. He thanked Amy Beaulieu and her team for their dedication. Chairman Durgin recognized this is a remarkable achievement and offered his congratulations.

OTHER  
BUSINESS

MSCA Chapter President Irina Seceleanu, along with Associate Professor Jennifer Mendell, were present for the meeting.

Dr. Seceleanu thanked the Trustees for their commitment to public higher education and advocacy efforts in the fight for additional funding for public education. Today as the Commonwealth is faced with the worst economic crises in our lifetime, faculty and staff at many community and public colleges in our state are facing the elimination of programs, layoffs and furloughs. The MTA has launched a significant campaign to help ensure that our public colleges and universities get the funding they need to weather the economic fallout from COVID-19. A resolution was created and she brought this to President Clark and the Board of Trustees with the hope it would be supported. She is very grateful to President Clark for his support of the resolution. She is hopeful that everyone will stand with them in their fight for the funding needed to ensure all students in the Commonwealth continue to have access to a quality education. (See attached remarks)

President Clark commented he is in full support of the resolution.

VOTED  
FOR: Unanimous  
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Longo, Denterlein) it was that the Board of Trustees accept the resolution in support of level-funding for public higher education as presented in the attachment provided by the MTA/MSCA. (Attachment)

In response to Trustee Caulfield's inquiry about the resolution coming from the Board, President Clark noted this was drafted by the MTA and it is expected that every higher education board will adopt it. BSU is the first to adopt this resolution.

Chairman Durgin noted the Board has adopted a few in the past and they have come from the Board of Trustees.

It was noted the MTA is rolling out the campaign region by region in the month of October. Virtual events will be held and perhaps a car rally as well. Our region will be October 19. The MSCA will partner with UMass Dartmouth, community colleges and partners in K-12. They look to build a coalition. An invitation will be sent to the Board, President Clark and his cabinet to join them.

VOTED  
FOR: Unanimous  
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Longo, Alexander) it was that the meeting be adjourned (6:10 pm).

Respectfully submitted,

*Margaret A. Caulfield, Esq.*

Margaret A. Caulfield, Esq.  
Secretary

Minutes prepared by:  
Tracey Keif