

Bridgewater State University
Board of Trustees Meeting
December 16, 2025
6:00pm
Heritage Room, Maxwell Library
Hybrid

MEMBERS PRESENT: Trustees Antonucci, Battaglino, Cesero (virtual), Giles, Jean-Michel (virtual), Prince, Taylor, Turchon, Vieira

MEMBERS ABSENT: Trustees Koutoujian, Ulett

ALSO PRESENT: President Clark; Acting Provost Alcon; Vice Presidents Bell, Croft, Gentlewarrior, Jason, Jean, Powers, Shropshire, Zuromski; Chief of Staff Leuenberger; CDO Oliver; Senior 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 former Governor Baker, having been complied with, and a quorum of the Board present, the Board of Trustees held a meeting on December 16, 2025, with Chairperson Taylor presiding.

Chairperson Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:17pm. He 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 Cesero-yes, Trustee Antonucci-yes, Trustee Vieira-yes, Trustee Turchon-yes, Trustee Giles-yes, Trustee Battaglino-yes, Trustee Prince-yes, Trustee Jean-Michel-yes, Trustee Taylor-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 (Antonucci, Prince) it was to approve the minutes from the Board of Trustees meeting held on October 23, 2025.
(Attachment)

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

**Chairperson's
Report**

Chairperson Taylor introduced Staff Assistant Meghan Eckelberger and announced that this was the last meeting for Staff Assistant Tracey Keif.

Student Trustee Update

Trustee Jean-Michel shared with the Board of Trustees an update on the goals he set at the beginning of the year. Trustee Jean-Michel wanted to create informational videos about the members of the Board of Trustees so that the students could familiarize themselves with the Board. Trustee Jean-Michel discussed this idea with Justin McCauley, Director of Family Relations and Divisional Communications for Student Life, to see how to accomplish this. They determined that it would be best to record long-form videos to upload to YouTube and then use the footage to create short-form content that students are more likely to engage with.

Trustee Jean-Michel's next goal is to go on wellness walks and discuss with students how they feel in spaces on campus. This stems from comments Trustee Jean-Michel heard from students about the art building feeling cramped and the walks would be modeled similarly to SGA's External Safety Assessment Tour. Trustee Jean-Michel's goal with these walkthroughs is to assess how BSU can make spaces more accessible and more representative of the students. He is looking at DMF as a starting point as a reference for what kind of spaces students would like to see. Trustee Jean-Michel's goal is to look at the Art Center, Rondileau Student Union, and Kelly Gym to see how these spaces can be improved.

Trustee Jean-Michel's third goal was to work with SGA to identify what mental health wellness resources are available to students. Trustee Jean-Michel found that a lot of resources are available at BSU, but students don't know how to access them. Trustee Jean-Michel hopes to work with Assistant Vice President of Student Life Chris Frazer on creating a one-stop link to access resource options online. Trustee Jean-Michel concluded his update.

Chair Taylor shared that he has been impressed by the hard work of the staff at BSU and the way they interact with and serve students on the campus.

President's Report

President Clark thanked the Trustees for their work and highlighted the work of Trustee Battaglino on the Board of Higher Education and the Massachusetts State College Building Authority Board. President Clark shared that the MSCBA named a new executive director: Brian Golden. President Clark shared his thanks in the spirit of their dedication and the holidays by offering the Board of Trustees boxes of chocolates. A small gift from the Alumni office was also shared and President Clark had CDO Oliver explain the meaning of the Tillinghast Hall ornaments. President Clark took a moment to recognize the passing of BSU alum and staff member Dan Darcy and shared that a way to honor and remember Dan will be brought forward at the February Board of Trustees meeting.

President Clark acknowledged the recent acts of violence in the news and ensured that BSU's goal is to keep the campus and its community safe.

President Clark mentioned the DHE bringing forth applied bachelor's degrees for 90 credits and expressed that BSU is opposed to it because it limits the student experience specifically for low-income students. For students looking to earn a degree in less time as a way to not spend as much money and enter the job market faster, they are leaving behind opportunities for internships and study abroad experiences which can give them an unfair disadvantage against a student in a 4-year degree program with a wider range of experiences when entering the job market. President Clark would rather see more investment in financial aid so that low-income students can have more opportunities to partake in these experiences.

President Clark shared that there will be a difficult budget environment soon and that Bridgewater State University has been asked to model 10% appropriations cut. This has not happened since the 1980s. President Clark said that he hopes that any state budget cuts do not affect financial aid, and he affirmed that BSU will do everything they can to protect and support its students and staff.

President Clark addressed that next year there will be a ballot question to lower the state tax percentage from 5% to 4% which would severely negatively impact public higher education as it is a discretionary account. BSU was asked by the Massachusetts Teachers Association to leave the Mass High Tech Council because of their support for the ballot question. President Clark said that he would rather remain on the Council and talk things through with the leadership. After speaking with leadership, President Clark did not feel that the Council's response was supportive of higher education, so the decision was made to leave the Mass High Tech Council.

President Clark shared that BSU was approved for \$2.89 million in success funding on December 16th, 2025. This will add 10 frontline staff to help with student success. President Clark added that it has to be staff members- not faculty. President Clark also shared that The Bright Act (the deferred maintenance capital bond bill) passed the House in November 2025, and it will move to the Senate within the next two months. It will take two years, but there will be funding that will flow to address deferred maintenance. BSU also received a grant for \$1.16 million for equipment for photonics.

President Clark also shared that Enrollment is still holding for the current year and it is also tracking up in the projections for Fall 2026. President Clark wrapped up his updates by sharing that he interviewed BSU's two previous presidents in a special video to commemorate the university's 185th anniversary and that video is now available to watch online. He then segued into introducing the meeting's presentation to the Board of Trustees on artificial intelligence and shared that BSU has already implemented an AI administrative policy.

AI Presentation

IT has been meeting with departments on campus to discuss how they use AI/ their feedback on AI. Assistant Vice President for AI and EdTech Innovation Eric LePage and Vice President and Chief

Information Officer Steve Zuromski shared a slide on how the BSU community is using AI (emails, study guides, course designs, accessibility, research). IT has been working with Academic Affairs to host workshops to help faculty update their curriculum and develop AI policies to avoid misuse of AI technology in the classroom. AVP LePage shared that the entire BSU community has access to Copilot as part of the university's Microsoft agreement. Assistant Vice President LePage also shared that IT is managing a business license version of ChatGPT for interested departments which gives them access to high-end research capabilities.

Assistant Vice President LePage shared that the admissions office is using a platform called Element 451 which is a customer relationship management system that allows Admissions to connect with students. There is an AI chatbot where newly admitted students and prospective students can ask questions and then connect with a human in the Admissions office. IT has partnered with Human Resources and Talent Management to develop the AI Olympians program which offers bronze, silver, and gold level certificates that employees can earn depending on what level of AI knowledge they wish to pursue. The training for this program is accessed through a campus-wide license of LinkedIn Learning. Assistant Vice President LePage also shared that Apple was on campus in November 2025 to deliver a workshop on their Apple Intelligence tools.

On April 1, 2026, the IT department will be hosting the 3rd annual AI summit on campus. Last year the program hosted over 300 in-person and virtual attendees.

Vice President Zuromski shared that IT is working on an AI ambassadors program which is an opportunity for administrative staff to have professional development opportunities while also learning how to use AI tools. The focus of the AI ambassadors will be to think of how AI can be used to improve the student experience and streamline administrative processes. Vice President Zuromski shared that there are several AI committees that BSU is participating in on campus, regionally, and nationally: the AI Advisory Committee, the Academic Affairs AI Committee, and The Center for AI which are all on campus, the Massachusetts AI Collaborative for Higher Education which is made up of the 24 public institutions in the Commonwealth, and the Higher Education AI Council which is a national group made up of 70 institutions across 20 states.

Vice President Zuromski shared that in October 2025, BSU finalized and published the institution's AI Policy. Vice President Zuromski is excited to launch a personalized chatbot for students that they can ask questions (like "what's my GPA?", "How can I get an internship?", etc.) 24/7. The chatbot can also translate information for students whose first language is not English and connect them to the appropriate resources on campus. The program will be soft launching in the spring and will fully launch in the fall of 2026.

This summer, in partnership with Dr. Ann Hurd from the Secondary Education and Leadership Program, IT received a BSU Innovation Grant to develop an AI-Ready Educators program. This initiative positions BSU as a state leader in preparing student teachers to integrate AI literacy into their classrooms.

IT has been working with the College of Continuing Studies to design BSU-branded, AI micro-credentials which are non-credit courses on AI fundamentals, ethics, and use cases.

Assistant Vice President LePage also shared that in partnership with the Office of Grants and Sponsored Projects, IT has applied for a FHPSI AI grant for BSU which, if funded, will provide roughly \$1.2 billion to support this work. Assistant Vice President LePage shared that AI can also be a useful tool for tutoring. A lot of students are doing homework or studying at times like 1am or 2am- using AI tutoring tools will make tutoring more accessible for students at all hours of the day. Using AI with the tutoring center is also helpful for students who aren't comfortable talking with someone in person.

Assistant Vice President LePage shared that the university is piloting AI internships with local businesses that are interested in bringing AI into their operations. In partnership with Career Services and Internships, BSU students in computer science, management information systems, and cybersecurity will be paired with regional employers. Vinny DeMacedo, Senior Advisor for External Relations, has been getting the word out with chambers of commerce to share the opportunity. Both chambers of commerce and students are interested in the idea of an AI internship.

Assistant Vice President LePage shared that he has worked with the Alumni and Development Office to survey alumni and gauge how they use AI in the workplace and they received a lot of responses. From this outreach, they are bringing alumni to campus to connect them with the AI Summit on campus in the spring.

Vice President Zuromski shared that the Center for AI was able to obtain a new position titled AI Success Strategist which is a grant-funded position through Success Funds that will focus on looking at how BSU can use AI tools to advance student success. Vice President Zuromski is looking to wrap that position search soon and have the position filled at the start of 2026.

Vice Chair Battaglino said that the Board of Trustees would love to have access to the AI Summit in the spring. Vice President Zuromski said he will be sending out a notification on the AI summit to Trustees soon.

Vice President Jason recognized Director of Health and Safety Patty Delaney for her work with the Campus Safety Health and Environmental Management Association and for being the recipient of a Safety Culture Innovation Award.

President Clark acknowledged that this is Vice President Shropshire's last BOT meeting since he will be retiring in January.

**ACTION/
INFORMATION
ITEMS**

EXECUTIVE

Letter of Intent for B.S. Degree in Data Science

Acting Provost Alcon gave a brief summary of why a degree in Data Science at BSU would be beneficial. Board Chair Taylor asked if there were any questions. There were no questions.

On motion duly made and seconded (Vieira, Turchon) it was

VOTED

FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

that the Board of Trustees approves the submission of a Letter of Intent for a B.S. degree in Data Sciences to the Department of Higher Education as recommended by the Executive Committee and described in the memorandum from President Clark dated December 9, 2025. (Attachment)

President's Expenses and (August-October 2025)

President Clark spent a total of \$305.12 in travel expenses for the months of August-October 2025. (Attachment)

ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

Sabbatical Leave Requests

Before voting, Vice Chair Battaglini asked Acting Provost Alcon to review what a sabbatical is.

On motion duly made and seconded (Giles, Antonucci) it was that the Board of Trustees accepts the Sabbatical Leave Requests as as recommended by the Academic and Student Affairs Committee and described in the memorandum from President Clark dated November 13, 2025. (Attachment)

VOTED

FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

University Fact Sheet, Five-Year Trends

Vice Chair Battaglini asked Acting Provost Alcon to share highlights from the Five-Year Fact Sheet. Acting Provost Alcon stated that enrollment has increased over the last five years, and there has been an increase in the enrollment of students of color and students with accessibility needs. Acting Provost Alcon also shared that retention is on a steady uptick. (Attachment)

Presentation from New Director of Family Relations

Vice Chair Battaglini recapped Justin McCauley's presentation. Vice President Croft highlighted the well-received and successful outreach

Justin McCauley has done and that Student Life is thrilled with the implementation of the position.

FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

FY2026/Q1 Trust Funds Report

Vice President Shropshire said that the occupancy report, which was initially at 108%, was a major driver behind the trust funds and it gave the Finance division a good idea for what the next quarter's budget would look like.

On motion duly made and seconded (Prince, Battaglino) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the FY2026/Q1 Trust Funds Report as recommended by the Finance and Operations Committee and outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated November 13, 2025.

(Attachment)

FY2026/Q1 Budget Report

Vice President Shropshire shared that BSU's enrollment was up 7% which helped put together the FY26 budget. Vice President Shropshire shared that everything is tracking according to plan.

(Attachment)

FY2026/Q1 Contracts Report

Vice President Shropshire explained what a contracts report is, and then the quarterly contract report was brought as an information item.

(Attachment)

Student Accounts Receivable

Vice President Shropshire shared that BSU is at a 1.8% receivable balance versus the student revenues. It tracks higher than last year, but over a five-year period, it is down from 2.8%. A driver of that change is that BSU did not do any write offs this past year.

Financial Aid Report

Vice President Shropshire summarized the Financial Aid Report. There were over 2,400 new applicants for the BSU Commitment and 889 were awarded the commitment. That number does not reflect the returning students- the overall count for students awarded the BSU Commitment was 1,500. BSU's loan balances went up, but Vice President Shropshire attributes that to the decrease in state support.

(Attachment)

Capital Projects Update

Vice President Jason shared that the Burnell Hall project is set to finish early. It is projected to be complete by April 2026. The Maxwell Library roof is going into contract and is projected to be finished by August 2026. Vice President Jason shared that the student space in RSU will be completed by early January. The Boyden cupola and grand stairs are ongoing projects. The Shea-Durgin Hall boilers replacement project is complete, and the Harrington Hall water

VOTED

FOR: Unanimous

CARRIED

mitigation will happen over the summer. Vice President Jason also shared that the campus-wide master plan is complete, and it was shared with the Foundation board on December 15, 2025.
(Attachment)

STUDENT SUCCESS AND DIVERSITY

Divisional Priorities

Vice President Gentlewarrior shared that her division is working with Academic Affairs and Alumni and Development to launch the BSU Student Success Program which was funded by an anonymous donor. This program supports students who come to BSU with a lower overall high school GPA. Vice President Gentlewarrior shared that her division is working to implement retention activities for Latin A and LGBTQIA students. There has been a downtick of 2% in LGBTQIA students, but an uptick of 10% for Latin A students. Vice President Gentlewarrior also shared that she is also working with Institutional Research to put together workshops for colleagues across campus to assist with putting their data from the campus climate survey into action.

(Attachment)

Supporting BSU's Values Through Competency Development Programming

Vice President Gentlewarrior shared the ways in which her division is working with colleagues to implement programming on campus that support the values of BSU and familiarizes students with the Institutional Values Statement. Highlights of campus programming were the support of LGBTQIA students in the Pride Center, the efforts of promoting the responsible use of social media in the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center, the Institutional Research Office's examination of the Student Experiences Survey to determine how to better serve students, and Human Resource's "Big Bear Energy" program which familiarizes students with the institutional values through hip hop.

(Attachment)

UNIVERSITY SAFETY AND SECURITY

Equal Opportunity/Title IX Data

At the committee meeting, Executive Director McMillan reviewed case statistics for the past three years as well as trends. Committee Chair Prince summarized the presentation. Title IX reports are up 16%, pregnancy accommodation requests are up 25%, and reasonable accommodation requests are down by 32%.

(Attachment)

Clery Report and Community Outreach Efforts

As an information item, the annual Clery report and BSUPD outreach efforts were provided by Chief Anderson and Deputy Chief Froio. Most of the areas in the Clery Report went down. BSUPD did 175 programs for community outreach. In the Committee meeting, Chief

Anderson and Deputy Chief Froio also shared that BSUPD partnered with Guiding Eyes for the Blind and added a new K-9. This black lab will be trained by BSUPD for 14-18 months before he begins his career as a professional seeing eye dog. Chief Anderson added that through a grant and President Clark's support, there is now a service dog training area at the bottom of Shea Durgin hill that is open for any student, faculty, or staff member who has a service dog.
(Attachment)

ALUMNI AND DEVELOPMENT

FY2026/Q1 Alumni and Development Dashboard Report

Chief Development Officer Oliver shared that \$2.1 million in commitments was brought in- \$1.6 million of that was cash flow and gifts. The endowment was at \$83.3 million. As of December 12, the endowment was at \$85.1 million. Chief Development Officer Oliver expects that the end of the year will bring in an additional \$2.3 million from an estate gift and pledge which will bring BSU up to \$7.6 million cash in hand. Chief Development Officer Oliver is anticipating an additional estate bequest of \$2.5 million by the end of June 2026 which alone brings BSU to a \$10 million cash in year if nothing else came in over the next 6 months.

Chair Taylor applauded and thanked the Alumni and Development division for their hard work. Chief Development Officer Oliver thanked everyone for their support with the division's efforts and large-scale events.

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Prince, Giles) it was that the Board of Trustees approves FY2026/Q1 Alumni and Development Dashboard Report as recommended by the Alumni and Development Committee and outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated December 2, 2025.
(Attachment)

Foundation Update

Chief Development Officer Oliver shared highlights from the foundation projects. The College of Graduate Studies property was completed in mid-August. This was key to getting their old space freed up to be able to address enrollment issues. Another property was purchased at 95 Park Avenue which will help with the Master Plan. Chief Development Officer Oliver shared that the Foundation continues to work with Russell Investments, and the return has been phenomenal.

Alumni Update

Chief Development Officer Oliver stated that the division continues to focus on Homecoming and building affinity groups. The goal is to bring more people home. Chief Development Officer Oliver remarked that without the efforts of the late Dan Darcy, her division would not have been as successful in exceeding their goals. Her division will emulate his behavior and strive to continue his legacy.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Town-Gown Update

Vice Chair Battaglino stated that Vice President Jean gave an update on the town of Bridgewater at the committee meeting. Vice Chair Battaglino asked if Vice President Jean had anything to add. Vice President Jean said that the relationship with the town has improved because of the work of Senior Advisor DeMacedo with the town councilors. Vice President Jean also shared that every 2-3 years, BSU sends an update on the university's impact on the town to every business and resident in Bridgewater through the mail.

Business Organization Strategy

Vice Chair Battaglino informed the meeting attendees of all the councils the cabinet participates in and thanked them for their efforts in improving relations with businesses in the southeastern Massachusetts region. Senior Advisor DeMacedo said that reminding businesses that BSU has been a leader in the community for 185 years made a huge difference in changing their perceptions of college's impact on the region.

Media Relations

Vice President Jean shared that BSU EMComm is trying to extend the paid media ad campaign that was done last year. Vice President Jean said the division usually tries to look at media relations in terms of where BSU can find opportunities and what's happening on campus that BSU can promote. Right now, there is a focus on cybersecurity. There was a story on the cyber range by Channel 5 a few months ago and an op-ed from Dr. Elizabeth Englander appeared in Commonwealth Magazine a few weeks ago.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Taylor and President Clark recognized Tracey Keif for her 33 years of service.

On motion duly made and seconded (Antonucci, Vieira) it was that the meeting be adjourned (8:25pm).

VOTED

FOR: Unanimous

CARRIED

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Turchon
Secretary

Minutes prepared by:
Meghan Eckelberger with assistance
from generative AI for transcription