

Bridgewater State University
Board of Trustees Meeting
February 22, 2022
Virtual Zoom Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Trustees Alexander, Durgin, Caulfield, Kopellas, Giles, Longo, Oliari, MacCormack, Prince and Turchon

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: President Clark; EVP and Provost Ismaili; Chief of Staff Leuenberger; Vice Presidents Gentlewarrior, Jason, Jean, Molife, Powers, Oravec, Shropshire, Zuromski; 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 virtually present, the Board of Trustees held a zoom meeting on February 22, 2022 with Chairman Durgin presiding.

Chairman Durgin called the meeting to order at 5:10pm. He asked the Trustees if it would be acceptable to dispense with a roll call after each action item as long as the vote is unanimous.

On motion duly made and seconded via a roll call vote, Trustee Alexander-yes, Trustee Giles-yes, Trustee Kopellas-yes, Trustee MacCormack-yes, Trustee Oliari-yes, Trustee Prince-yes, Trustee Turchon-yes, Trustee Caulfield-yes, Trustee Longo-yes, Trustee Durgin-yes, it was

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

that the Board of Trustees dispense with a roll call vote for each unanimous vote for the duration of this meeting due to the length of the agenda.

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (MacCormack, Turchon) it was to approve the minutes from the Board of Trustees meeting held on December 14, 2021.
(Attachment)

**CHAIRMAN'S
REPORT**

Chairman Durgin greeted everyone and welcomed Renee Bernier, Coordinator of Academic Coaching and Research Services, as the new incoming APA Chapter President.

MSCA/APA Remarks

MSCA Chapter President Seceleanu and APA Chapter President Bernier presented remarks for the key priorities and main challenges that faculty, librarians and staff are facing. There is increased workload due to the hiring freeze, retirements and resignations as well as a substantial pay cut in real dollars given the inflation rate of 7% during this past year. They are hopeful for inclusion of faculty, librarians and staff in the decision-making process to meet the challenges of under enrollment and underfunding. Shared governance will help to find solutions to these challenges. The Fair Share Amendment is a proposal on the statewide ballot in November 2022 to amend the Massachusetts Constitution, creating an additional tax of four percentage points on the portion of a person's annual income above \$1M. If the amendment passes, it could be a game changer for our students.

(See attachment for full remarks)

Student Voice

Trustee Kopellas noted students are anxious and are experiencing fatigue in wearing masks. Communication is a key component for students. They are excited for spring break which will help morale.

**PRESIDENT'S
REPORT**

President Clark welcomed Renee Bernier and Jenna Shales. The Fare Share Amendment will greatly benefit higher education. He personally supports the amendment. It's essential to get to the average of the United States when it comes to per capita funding. From an income perspective, we are near the bottom out of the 50 states. Public higher education educates two-thirds of the students who go on to college.

Chairman Durgin stated the Board will offer their support of this amendment.

President Clark is pleased with the establishment of the Endowed Chair in Free Speech and Expression. Higher ed is a beacon of free speech and expression. It's important to note the very generous donation from Patricia and Bruce Bartlett which enabled this happen.

Provost Ismaili introduced Dr. Aeon Skoble who was appointed as the inaugural Bartlett Chair for Free Speech and Expression. He also thanked Ellen Oliver for her support and assistance through this process.

Dr. Skoble stated it is a profound honor for him and he is excited about the work this will entail. You cannot have a university that is afraid of the value of ideas and freedom of speech and expression. His goal is to run programming around the following themes: speakers, panel discussions, work with student groups, conferences, etc.

**ACTION/INFORMATION
ITEMS****EXECUTIVE**President's Updates – COVID Response

President Clark stated the COVID protocols are set to expire for the indoor mask mandate and travel. They are mindful of movement in the state and the country in easing protocols as well as the higher transmission rate in this area. After spring break, they will consider easing some protocols and will continue with testing and offering free test kits. Out-of-state travel will now be allowed. After spring break, it is expected there will be some indoor masking policies that will continue.

Mid-Year Divisional Updates

The mid-year divisional updates were provided as an information item at the Executive Committee meeting. They are on target to complete initiatives that were identified for this year.

(Attachment)

President's Expenses and Upcoming Travel

President Clark's expenses were brought as an information item.

(Attachment)

ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRSSpring Residence Hall Occupancy Report

The spring residence hall occupancy report was provided for information. Housing is at 80.9% of design capacity for the spring.

(Attachment)

Spring Enrollment and Admissions Report

Spring new transfer enrollment is up slightly; preliminary total enrollment for Spring 2022 is currently down 793 students from Spring 2021. The residence hall occupancy is 2,599 which is above 78% of the budgeted goal. The overall enrollment is 9,321 (increase of 61 students). Undergraduate stands at 7,754 with graduate students at 1,567.

(Attachment)

Financial Aid Update

Monies have been distributed from the CARES Act funds. There was a record number of applications for aid which Financial Aid handled and will be distributed by the end of the semester. The ending of these funds are being considered as it will have an impact on our students. However, students are being active in pursuing ways to support their education.

Student Affairs and Enrollment Management Divisional Update

An update was provided at the committee meeting. The whole staff is

to be commended for their work and taking on additional responsibilities.
(Attachment)

Approval of Childhood Studies, B.A. – Full Proposal

Provost Ismaili stated the proposal builds on a minor that has been in place for a number of years. The program will build knowledge and skills for our students and they can potentially move on to fields where licensure is available. It is anticipated that it will be offered to students this coming fall.

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (MacCormack, Caulfield) it was that the Board of Trustees accepts the submission of a new major to the Department of Higher Education for a B.A. degree in Childhood Studies at Bridgewater State University as recommended by the Academic and Student Affairs Committee and as described in the memorandum from President Clark dated January 31, 2022.
(Attachment)

NECHE Update

A report was provided to the Committee on the process of preparing for the NECHE visit which is moving forward.
(Attachment)

New Degree Programs in Development

A report was shared for new degree programs which are in development or under discussion.
(Attachment)

Academic Affairs Divisional Update

Provost Ismaili provided an update of his priorities at the Committee meeting.
(Attachment)

FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

FY2022/Q2 Trust Funds Report

Vice President Shropshire noted the occupancy was better than expected which is good news. They had to take \$4M for a one-time financing adjustment to assist with the decline in occupancy.

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Durgin, Prince) it was that the Board of Trustees accepts and approves the FY2022/Q2 Trust Funds Report as recommended by the Finance and Operations Committee and as outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated January 31, 2022.
(Attachment)

FY2022/Q2 Budget Report

Vice President Shropshire noted the Q2 budget is going well. The

projections show they can stay within the \$2M deficit. The Hunt Hall elevator project now has resources allocated. They will continue to budget conservatively until they know the full impact of COVID.
(Attachment)

FY2022/Q2 Contracts Report

The quarterly contracts report was provided as an information item.
(Attachment)

FY2021 ACFR Report

The ACFR report was provided as an information item to the Committee. BSU has received a consistent commendation for the reporting of finances. Committee Chair Longo complimented Vice President Shropshire, Ms. Beaulieu and staff for achieving this status year after year.
(Attachment)

Capital Projects Update

The capital projects update was provided as an information item. Vice President Jason highlighted the Burnell Hall project, noted the solar initiatives is complete and spoke about dining improvements.
(Attachment)

FY2023 Budget

Vice President Shropshire stated the Governor's budget has been submitted, division and trust fund budgets are being prepared, work has begun towards a final expense estimate and they have submitted refinancing to the Building Authority. The divisions have been asked to submit budget scenarios with a 2, 5 or 10 % reduction.

ALUMNI AND DEVELOPMENT

FY2022/Q2 Alumni and Development Dashboard Report

Committee Chair Turchon stated the second quarter was very strong. The endowment is over \$62M and total net assets are close to \$72M. Annual Giving Day will be held on April 13 and 14. Total commitments are \$4.8M; total donations are \$3.8M and there was a \$2.6M increase over this time from last year. As of February 15, over \$4M in donations have been received.

On motion duly made and seconded (Turchon, Caulfield) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the FY2022/Q2 Alumni and Development Dashboard Report as recommended by the Alumni and Development Committee and outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated January 31, 2022.
(Attachment)

Alumni Update

Committee Chair Turchon highlighted the many projects underway:

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

Bylaw review, friend-raising opportunities, dinner for students with President Clark and Carrie Kulich-Clark, admission events to bring alumni back who have children/grandchildren who may be interested in attending BSU, homecoming, excellence award event, senior champagne toast, BAA Alumni Reception and the reestablishment of the Alumni Council.

RACIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY

Committee Report

Chairman Durgin noted the committee received an update on initiatives and the process which has been developed. Provost Ismaili stated subgroups have been established and initiatives are identified which the groups are responsible for. Vice President Gentlewarrior said there are equity minded professional development opportunities and Vice President Powers spoke to the hiring process for new employees/searches as it relates to the initiatives from the task force.

HONORARY DEGREE ADVISORY

President Clark noted the committee met and reviewed the nominations received from the campus community; recommendations were added to the pool for consideration. He was pleased to announce Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley will be the afternoon undergraduate commencement speaker.

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Caulfield, Turchon) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the recommendation to award an Honorary Degree to Ayanna Pressley at the University's 2022 Undergraduate Commencement Convocation as outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated February 17, 2022. (Attachment)

President Clark noted Barbara Stevens and Elaine Clement-Holbrook will speak together at the morning ceremony.

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (MacCormack, Turchon) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the recommendation to award an Honorary Degree to Barbara Stevens at the University's 2022 Undergraduate Commencement Convocation as outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated February 17, 2022. (Attachment)

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (MacCormack, Turchon) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the recommendation to award an Honorary Degree to Elaine Clement-Holbrook at the University's 2022 Undergraduate Commencement Convocation as outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated February 17, 2022. (Attachment)

VOTED

FOR: Unanimous

CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Caulfield, Longo) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the recommendation to award an Honorary Degree to Dr. Carlos Santiago at the University's 2022 Graduate Commencement Convocation as outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated February 17, 2022.
(Attachment)

VOTED

FOR: Unanimous

CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (Longo, Turchon) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the recommendation to award a Distinguished Service Award to Peter Kelleher at the University's 2022 Undergraduate Commencement Convocation as outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated February 17, 2022.
(Attachment)

**OTHER
BUSINESS**

Trustee Kopellas noted there are two student-directed theatre shows coming up: Sensitive Guys and Blood at the Root if anyone is interested in attending.

VOTED

FOR: Unanimous

CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (MacCormack, Turchon) it was that the meeting be adjourned (6:30 pm).

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret A. Caulfield
Margaret A. Caulfield, Esq.
Secretary

Minutes prepared by:
Tracey Keif