

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION**

**COMMITTEE:** Fiscal Affairs and Administrative Policy                      **NO.:** FAAP 06-07  
**COMMITTEE DATE:** December 8, 2005  
**BOARD DATE:** December 15, 2005

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**APPROVAL TO PROCEED WITH A WESTFIELD STATE COLLEGE ACADEMIC BUILDING STUDY**

**MOVED:**                      The Board of Higher Education hereby gives Westfield State College approval to proceed with an academic building study. This approval is given with the understanding that Westfield State College is responsible for all costs related to the study and that it will not proceed with design and/or construction until the Board of Higher Education gives its approval to proceed.

Authority:                      Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9  
Contact:                        Kurt T. Steinberg, Associate Vice Chancellor for Fiscal Policy

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Recent History

Since 2000, Westfield State College has experienced an increase in enrollment and strong growth in several academic programs. Between 2000 and 2005 overall enrollment has increased 21%, and day division headcount alone has increased 17% from 3,406 to 4,114. Some of this growth is accounted for in the above-average increase in students enrolled in the eight academic programs listed in the table below, all of which grew by 20% or more in the last five years.

### Programs with Greater than Average Growth Fall 2000 - Fall 2005 (Double Majors Included)

Major	Fall 2000	Fall 2005	Increase	Percent Increase
History	100	168	68	40%
Liberal Studies	328	497	169	34%
Special Education	61	89	28	31%
Business Management	407	580	173	30%
Mathematics	51	69	18	26%
Movement Science	151	198	47	24%
Social Work	16	20	4	20%
Criminal Justice	579	722	143	20%

The growth trend in enrollment is expected to continue. There has been a 23% increase in applications since 2000, which the College attributes to the quality, affordability, and attractiveness of Westfield's academic programs.

### First-Year Students as Percent of Total Enrollment in Selected Programs

Major	1 <sup>st</sup> -Year Students
History	25%
Liberal Studies	20%
Special Education	28%
Business Management	38%
Mathematics	41%
Movement Science	38%
Social Work	71%
Criminal Justice	33%

### Space Utilization and Needs

Growth in enrollment has not been coupled with an increase in classroom space. In the past 30 years, new facilities built at or acquired by the College have been

primarily for non-academic use. Classroom capacity has actually decreased as classrooms have been converted to offices for essential student services and faculty. Remaining classroom space is largely antiquated and cannot be retrofitted for the technology or configurations required by contemporary, specialized curricula and best practices in teaching.

The option of renovating Parenzo Hall to bring it up to modern standards and address safety, comfort, and energy efficiency needs would cost an estimated \$20 million and would not deliver the additional capacity required.

### **Proposal**

The College proposes a self-financed study of the construction of a new academic building equipped with wireless capabilities, modern classroom technology, and program-specific labs and equipment. Beyond adding cutting-edge classroom space, a new building would resolve ADA compliance issues, realign academic programs housed elsewhere for greater interdisciplinary collaboration, allow offices to move out of residence halls, and provide the necessary swing space for a future renovation of Parenzo Hall.