

## RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS**, the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education recognizes the substantial accomplishments of Dr. Ramon Torrecilha at the conclusion of his four and a half years of service as the 20<sup>th</sup> President of Westfield State University, having enhanced the local, regional and national standing of the institution; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Torrecilha has led Westfield State through a period of historic challenges, specifically the COVID-19 crisis, providing guidance and support for students, faculty and staff as they have navigated rapid, unprecedented change in the transition to online learning; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Torrecilha has been an outspoken voice advocating for equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout his tenure at Westfield State, never hesitating to speak out promptly and forcefully against acts of bias and hate speech, whether perpetuated online or on campus; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Torrecilha has been instrumental in advancing the important mission of educational equity and specifically, has lent his strong support to regional programs such as early college, the Westfield Promise and the 100 Males to College programs, all of which advance the Commonwealth's equity agenda for higher education; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Torrecilha has increased institutional financial aid by over \$1 million dollars; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Torrecilha is credited with strengthening the singular Westfield State Experience program to provide students with guided academic pathways and rich learning experiences; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Torrecilha funded Westfield's Center for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity to provides strategic cross-disciplinary support for all students, faculty, and staff to engage in creative scholarship; and

**WHEREAS**, during his tenure, Dr. Torrecilha secured \$40 million dollars in state funding for capital improvements to the university campus, including the renovation of Parenzo Hall; and

**WHEREAS**, Under President Torrecilha's leadership, Westfield State saw a resurgence of philanthropic activity including more than \$3 million in gifts and pledges secured in 2018 and a record-setting gift of \$1.1 million, paving the way for Westfield State to earn an All-Steinway School designation; and

**WHEREAS**, local business and civic partners have cited President Torrecilha's tireless engagement in community affairs, specifically his work to build effective partnerships with Westfield Public Schools and Holyoke Community College, also noting the 60,000 hours faculty and students have spent volunteering in the community during his tenure; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Torrecilha's profile as an immigrant and first-generation college student exemplifies our ever-changing student body and is a source of pride for our system of higher education as well as a source of inspiration for students; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Torrecilha leaves Westfield having enjoyed the unwavering support of the campus board of trustees, as well as the board's endorsement of important structural changes to support the University's academic mission and planning for years to come.

### NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT

*On behalf of the members of the Board of Higher Education, the Department staff, and the students and institutions of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education honors and commends Dr. Ramon Torrecilha on the occasion of his retirement from the presidency of Westfield State University.*

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Chris Gabrieli, Chairman  
Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

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Carlos Santiago, Commissioner  
Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

June 23, 2020