

## BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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December 1, 2015  
12:00 p.m.

Department of Higher Education  
1 Ashburton Place, Room 1401  
Main Conference Room  
Boston, Massachusetts

### Special Meeting Minutes

A special meeting of the Board of Higher Education (BHE) was held on Tuesday, December 1, 2015, in the DHE Conference Room, Room 1401, One Ashburton Place, Boston, Massachusetts.

#### The following Board members were present:

Sheila Harrity, Vice Chair  
Nancy Hoffman  
Tom Hopcroft  
Donald Irving  
Robert Johnson  
James Peyser, Secretary of Education  
Fernando Reimers  
Henry Thomas  
Owen Wiggins

#### The following Board members were absent:

Chris Gabrieli, Chair  
Dani Monroe  
Paul Toner

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:14 p.m.

#### II. MOTIONS

##### A. Board of Higher Education

##### Documents Used:

- *BHE Motion 16-02 Westfield State University Presidential Appointment, and attachments*

##### **BHE 16-02 Westfield State University Presidential Appointment**

Vice Chair Sheila Harrity stated that the purpose of the meeting was to consider Ramon Torrecilha, for appointment as the next President of Westfield State University (WSU). Dr. Torrecilha has been recommended by the Westfield board of trustees after an extensive search. Vice Chair Harrity opened the discussion by inviting Commissioner Santiago to introduce the motion and offer remarks.

Commissioner Santiago welcomed everyone to the special BHE Meeting. He began by summarizing the general procedure that the BHE has established for presidential searches under the BHE-approved guidelines. He then noted for the

purpose of full disclosure that he knew the recommended candidate, Dr. Ramon Torrecilha, when he was a professor twenty years ago in Wisconsin. He highlighted that the search did operate under the new BHE presidential search and selection guidelines, which included participation of the BHE in the search process. Commissioner Santiago stated that Board member Henry Thomas participated on the committee on behalf of the BHE. The Commissioner confirmed that he reviewed all candidate materials, and interviewed the finalists with the Secretary's office. Commissioner Santiago finalized his remarks by stating his approval for the recommendation and then turning the conversation over to WSU Trustee Kevin Queenin.

Trustee Kevin Queenin welcomed everyone and thanked the Commissioner for the opportunity to address the Board. Trustee Queenin extended regrets from Board Chair Elizabeth Scheibel who could not attend today's meeting. He acknowledged Student Trustee and Committee member Justin Connolly, who was present today. Trustee Queenin then provided an overview of the entire search process, which consisted of 221 inquires in response to the position description; 85 nominations were submitted; 11 airport interviews were held out of 13 that were scheduled and this resulted in three selected finalists for WSU full board consideration. Trustee Queenin provided an overview of the campus interviews of each finalist candidate. Upon the completion of the interviews, on October 28, 2015 the WSU Board of trustees unanimously voted to recommend Dr. Ramon Torrecilha for President. Additionally, he provided the educational and professional background of Dr. Torrecilha and concluded by urging the board to accept the WSU trustees' recommendation for President.

BHE Vice Chair Harrity then invited Dr. Ramon Torrecilha to address the Board. Dr. Torrecilha thanked everyone for the opportunity to be here today. He then began by describing his past experience and educational background, noting that he started his career in Brazil and then transitioned to the United States. He continued by elaborating on possible goals and programs he would like to establish at Westfield State University if he were appointed as President. He then asked the BHE if they had any questions or comments.

Vice Chair Harrity invited BHE members to ask questions of Dr. Torrecilha. Questions touched upon demographics in student populations, technology innovation, effective use of resources, working with K-12 systems, diversity and racial awareness, experience with public and private institutions, and also strategic planning. Additionally, there was a brief discussion regarding how the candidate would address the past leadership challenges at WSU, as well as a discussion of ways to enhance the institution's athletic departments.

There being no further discussion Vice Chair Harrity called for a motion. The following motion to approve the appointment of Dr. Torrecilha was duly made, seconded and passed unanimously:

**MOVED: WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT**

The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the October 28, 2015 recommendation of the Westfield State University Board of Trustees recommending Ramon Torrecilha as President of Westfield State University. Such appointment is effective on or about January 24, 2016, is subject to the successful completion of a State Police background check, and is subject to and in accordance with the attached terms and conditions of appointment.

**Authority:** Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Sections 9(q) and 21

**Contact:** Constantia T. Papanikolaou, General Counsel

Sheila Harrity congratulated Dr. Torrecilha. Henry Thomas also wanted to acknowledge the dedication and efforts of the Search Committee in identifying a great candidate to recommend for the WSU presidency.

**III. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:57 p.m.