

**Massachusetts Board of Higher Education
Strategic Planning Committee Meeting Minutes**

The April 30, 2019 meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) was held in the 21st Floor Conference Room, One Ashburton Place, Boston, Massachusetts.

SPC Members Present:

Committee Chair Fernando Reimers; J.D. La Rock; Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner; Jim Peyser, Secretary of Education

Paul Toner was absent, but participated via conference call.

BHE Staff Present:

Winifred Hagan, Kate Copans, Dena Papanikolaou, Patricia Marshall

I. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chairperson Fernando Reimers called the meeting to order at 12:45 p.m. and invited those in attendance to introduce themselves.

II. MINUTES

Chair Reimers brought forth a motion to accept the minutes of the December 4, 2018 SPC meeting. The motion was seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously by all SPC members in attendance.

III. REMARKS & REPORTS

In the interest of time, neither Chair Reimers nor Commissioner Santiago offered remarks.

IV. Presentations – Touch Point II

Chair Reimers invited Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt) President David Nelson to present on MassArt’s strategic plan. President Nelson introduced his colleagues: Provost Kymberly Pinder, and Dean Lyssa Palu-ay, Chief of Staff Susana Segat, and Director of Internal Relations, Kate Russell.

President Nelson began the presentation with an overview of the planning process, which was by a steering committee. The committee engaged with faculty, staff, students, alumni and the community and received over 800 comments and responses. MassArt displayed exhibitions of the plans throughout the planning process, making the content as it evolved accessible to all. President Nelson described the process as iterative and non-linear process by design in order to allow for the surfacing of important elements that would need to be included. MassArt did not begin with the idea of changing the mission statement, rather it emerged as a something that needed to be changed. President Nelson further explained that the proposed mission and the statement of values were tested and resonated strongly with the community.

President Nelson continued with the MassArt Ten Year Horizon plan, highlighting five priorities that emerged during the process. He underscored MassArt's Identity Initiative stating that it would be a student-ready campus, intentionally subverting pressure for students to be college-ready and intending instead to redirect pressure and be guided in every decision by the question- **Does this make MassArt a student ready institution?** President Nelson described how MassArt will invest in people, who are creating the future of the institution. He stated that moving forward, the campus has assembled a tactical team and an assessment team, and the steering committee is also staying together and will annually assess and update the plan. He remarked that the steering committee is using Achieva™¹ software to track their progress on the plan, and he has all the accountability staff on his cabinet. Further, the budget advisory committee is aligning budgets with the strategic plan and its future iterations. President Nelson noted that several of their priorities do not cost any money, though they do cost time because it means structuring priorities and cultural change. He concluded the presentation by stating that the plan will take MassArt to their 150th year.

Chair Reimers thanked President Nelson for his presentation and opened the floor for comments, noting that the SPC's purpose at Touch Point II is to provide the campus with feedback that can be taken back to the campus community. Chair Reimers began by observing that many elements of the MassArt plan are very clear, particularly the use of evidence in comparing MassArt to peer institutions. He stated, however, that he had difficulty finding a clear connection that aligns to the Board of Higher Education's (BHE) priority of equity, and suggested the plan be more intentional in addressing equity. He noted that 25% of MassArt students are minority and graduate at a higher percentage than other institutions have demonstrated. Committee Chair Reimers underscored that in making it a priority to close this gap, MassArt could also emphasize that this offers great value to the state. Chair Reimers added that he appreciated the statement of using the arts to improve the world. He noted that the documents discuss MassArt's connection and contribution to the creative economy, and he suggested further explaining these and their relationships to access and equity.

Commissioner Santiago stated that he was pleased with the MassArt's strategic planning progress since Touch Point I, and he commended President Nelson and his staff for moving forward in such a clear way. He reiterated Chair Reimers comments on making a connection to the overarching state agenda on equity.

SPC member La Rock thanked President Nelson for the presentation and report. He remarked that he was curious about the business model being used and asked for President Nelson's reflections on MassArt having flexibility-- specifically how would MassArt accomplish its goals in a broader context in which financial models are challenged. President Nelson responded that they have developed a few models to address the question of how to ensure that MassArt is the best value for an art education. He stated that he can look down the road and see tuition and fees that are way out of proportion, and that MassArt will have to determine how graduate education fits into the future, which will also train the next generation of art faculty. President Nelson acknowledged that the current business model is more reliant on tuition and fees than desired. Additionally, for the past three years in a row, MassArt has experienced the largest classes ever enrolled, resulting in campus space issues. SPC member La Rock asked President Nelson if he had an explanation for the enrollment boosts, perhaps attributing it to the

¹ Achieva is a software development company

decline of for-profit institutions in this space. President Nelson responded that they were unsure; in addition to the decline of for-profit institutions, MassArt has shifted to the Common Application, moved to a test optional model, and added staff to the enrollment management team.

SPC member La Rock asked President Nelson if he could identify any opportunities for the market. President Nelson responded that they believe there are opportunities that will additionally address space issues, such as an evening school. MassArt Provost Dr. Pinder stated that she wished to address the enrollment question and underscored that for-profit institutions have fallen out of favor and that this shift has been driven by industry. Industry desires students with art backgrounds, even for gaming technology because an art education provides a more fully developed employee in these creative industries. Employers want critical thinking and creativity and they were not seeing those results from the for-profit art education industry. She continued that in their evening school, the average student is now what would have previously been considered a non-traditional student and the idea that a school is built around the traditional model with a day student being supported by their parents is no longer a viable model. She continued that MassArt has changed its curriculum to be more flexible, and students see a huge opportunity to add night classes which will allow for more flexibility for the students.

Secretary Peyser stated that an element of the plan that came across strong was the desire to become a stronger and well-recognized cultural asset, but what did not come across very strongly was the desire to develop human capital. He remarked that MassArt has an economic value to Boston and to Massachusetts and he suggested that they plan be more forthright in that. He additionally remarked that the plan contained an ambitious statement on the value of art in transforming the world, but he felt it was missing a statement on the ability of art to transform individuals. Further, in the metrics document, there are some programs with enrollments of fewer than 5-10 students, and he asked if there is any effort to review these low enrollment programs or restructure.

President Nelson responded that looking at the financials by credit hour will look much different, and cited their glass program as an example, which additionally brings value to the campus because every student wants to visit the glass studio. Secretary Peyser suggested presenting it that way in the plan. Dr. Pinder remarked that this is a challenge for all of higher education. She commented that students are trying to create a more fluid way to approach their education which is apart from the rigid structure of majors, and in response to this, MassArt is trying to create classes across multiple disciplines. SPC Chair Reimers asked what will test your hypothesis that you are creating links to what are graduates are doing in the world. President Nelson responded that MassArt can and does track this, citing the example of MassArt alumni who are on the production team for the Netflix show *Black Mirror*, specifically the software used in the *Bandersnatch* episode. He remarked that they know those stories and can collect that data better, and acknowledged that MassArt can do a better job of showing that in the plan. He continued by referencing the earlier equity agenda question and cited the Compass program, which provides four years of support for students from underserved backgrounds. He remarked that the campus is concerned with gaps and the faculty are engaged in closing them.

Regarding equity gaps, Commissioner Santiago responded that while good policy and initiatives help, truly addressing equity gaps requires campus cultural change, which can include professional development or having difficult conversations on campus. President Nelson

introduced Dr. Lyssa Pula-ay, Dean of the Office of Justice, Equity, and Transformation (JET), an office that was created to achieve systemic equity related to access, opportunity and dignity at MassArt. Dr. Pula-ay remarked MassArt is uniquely positioned to address this unlike any other campus nationally due to their Compass program, their 9-16 programs, and youth pathways which serve as national models. She also noted that the campus recently had an assembly on MassArt Day in which students and faculty engaged on historical issues, including systems that perpetuate inequality; she believes that they can address cultural change on inequality in a meaningful way. Chair Reimers thanked the MassArt team for their presentation.

V. Motions

Chair Reimers invited Westfield State President Ramon Torrecilha to the table and introduced SPC 19-06, Approval of Westfield State University Mission Statement.

Secretary Peyser stated that he liked the brief explanation for the change but found it to be missing the word “diverse”. He expressed concern, particularly within the context of BHE’s equity agenda. He asked if the mission statement needed to be tweaked to include it. President Torrecilha responded that Westfield felt it was embedded in the overarching meaning of the new mission statement. Provost Diane Prusank responded that the statement contains an emphasis on accessibility and there was a conscious conversation about diversity that included a way to tighten up the mission statement and include it. SPC Chair Reimers stated that it was clear to him that Westfield is not doing this for only the most privileged part of the institution, but for all students.

There being no further discussion, Chair Reimers called for a vote on SPC 19-06. On a motion duly made and seconded, the following motion was approved by all members present:

SPC 19-06 APPROVAL OF WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT

VOTED: The BHE hereby approves the Westfield State University revised mission statement to read as follows:

Westfield State University is a public institution offering accessible quality undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal arts, sciences and professional studies. Our welcoming community focuses on student engagement and success. We contribute to the economic, social and cultural growth of the northeast region by developing the knowledge, skills, and character essential for students to become responsible leaders and engaged citizens.

The Board further authorizes the Commissioner to forward the same to the Secretary of Education, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 7.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Sections 7, 9(e), and 22(n).

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D., Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success

Chair Reimers introduced the next motion, SPC 19-07 Approval of Westfield State University's Strategic Plan. He stated that the last time Westfield came before the SPC, the committee provided some suggestions that he did not see reflected in this version of the plan.

President Torrecilha responded that there were two things taken from the Touch Point II commentary which are articulated on page 3 of the plan. He noted that Westfield also created a new section on implementation in the document. He stated that the Secretary had asked them how they could reconcile this push to create a very rich robust experience for day students, while at the same time supporting the working adult student population. President Torrecilha described the campus consideration of how to best merge the two, noting that this was central to the conversations on how the institution was to remain relevant in the future. Provost Prusank responded that Westfield seeks to create an experience of cohesion for students and remarked that the plan targets both populations in very different ways. Day students have a scaffolding experience, but adult learners may have already attended college.

Secretary Peyser asked President Torrecilha to comment on his general sense for overall enrollment. President Torrecilha responded that they previously did not utilize enrollment management and they used to experience large fluctuations in class size, which put lots of unnecessary stress on the system. He continued that they are trying to think about their "new normal" which includes a class size of 1050 first time, never enrolled students, plus an additional 350 community college transfers. He discussed Westfield's excess space in residence halls and remarked that the cost of implementing the plan is viewed as an investment in keeping the institution relevant.

Secretary Peyser expressed concern that the plan includes increasing selectivity. He remarked that UMASS is looking for more enrollment outside of Massachusetts and might be impacting state universities' enrollments as well. President Torrecilha remarked that Westfield continues their efforts to work with high schools in the area to secure its footprint and that the intent in increasing selectivity goes to retention. Secretary Peyser acknowledged the idea and suggested that the focus should be on better serving the students who are there, not in trying to get other, better ones in the door. Provost Prusank responded that Westfield plans to recruit students that are truly ready and direct those not ready to community college partners.

Commissioner Santiago remarked that he is aware of the collaborations that Westfield has with community college partners, and he referenced the earlier equity conversation with MassArt. President Torrecilha responded that they have adopted a cultural commitment to do the equity work internally. He noted that most of Westfield's students are white and those students who come from Springfield and Holyoke are not white. He continued that Westfield needs to change its culture and that this will be the key to fulfilling the equity promise.

There being no further discussion, Chair Reimers called for a vote on SPC 19-07. On a motion duly made and seconded, the following motion was approved by all members present:

SPC 19-07 APPROVAL OF WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN

VOTED: The BHE hereby approves the **Westfield State University** Strategic Plan 2019-2024 and authorizes the Commissioner to forward the same to the Secretary of Education for final approval pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, 9(l) and 22(l).

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Sections 7, 9(f), 9(l) and 22(l); BHE By-Laws, Article I, Section 3(d) and Article III.

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D, Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Reimers called for a motion to adjourn.

List of documents used:

MassArt PowerPoint Presentation on Strategic Plan, April 30, 2019

Working draft of MassArt Strategic Plan 2018-2023, April 22, 2019

SPC 19-06 Motion to approve Westfield State Mission Statement

SPC 19-07 Motion to approve Westfield State Strategic Plan

DHE PowerPoint Presentation on SPC votes, April 30, 2019