

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Strategic Planning

NO.: SPC 19-07

COMMITTEE DATE: April 30, 2019

BOARD DATE: May 7, 2019

APPROVAL OF WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education 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, Sections 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

Background

A fundamental responsibility of the BHE is to provide overall direction to the state's system of public higher education. The Board enacts this responsibility by establishing statewide goals and by regularly measuring and reporting progress toward these goals building upon the foundation of the Vision Project and Closing Gaps. Articulating statewide goals has no impact on creating greater equity in public higher education unless these goals and performance metrics are embraced by the individual colleges and universities and incorporated into their strategic plans. Massachusetts state statute therefore charges the BHE and the Secretary of Education with reviewing and approving campus strategic plans. M.G.L. c. 15A, §§9(f), 9(l) and 22(l); BHE By-Laws, Article I, Section 3(d) and Article III.

Westfield State University Planning Process

Touch Point I took place on September 8, 2017 with a kickoff at the traditional opening of the academic year on campus. A Town Hall style meeting ensued with President Torrecilha, including an introduction of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. Commissioner Santiago provided the charge to the campus on behalf of BHE and the SPC.

During Touch Point II on October 16, 2018, Westfield State University (Westfield) President Torrecilha provided an overview of the strategic planning process to the SPC, noting that it was an opportunity to align university priorities with statewide priorities. The goals, priorities and strategies in the strategic plan were developed by the campus community. Implementation and measures of success were driven and developed by the Westfield leadership team. SPC members validated Westfield's process and recommended improvements on the specific goals that address completion. SPC urged Westfield to be more explicit regarding the target goals of the plan. Chair Reimers recommended clearer metrics for some goals citing the Quinsigamond Community College plan as an example. SPC member La Rock noted that the plan provides evidence and reflects the state's priorities. He asked that specific enrollment goals be reflected in the final plan and noted that first year retention rates should also be addressed in the final plan. Secretary Peyser remarked that enrollment goals are bullish for underrepresented minority students and related to projections for adult learners. He suggested that there is tension between those two things and that Westfield should also include a more modular experience for adult learners in the final plan.

Touch Point III: On February 7, 2019 the Westfield State University Board of Trustees approved the Westfield State University Strategic Plan 2019-2024. On March 11, 2019, President Torrecilha submitted the plan to Commissioner Santiago and on March 18, 2019 the plan was distributed to the Strategic Planning Committee. This revised proposed plan includes an implementation section that develops each of the goals and priorities with corresponding specific actions and measures that will provide evidence for attainment of the goals.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

Staff thoroughly reviewed all documentation submitted by Westfield State University at Touch Point II and Touch Point III. Staff recommendation is for approval of the proposed **Westfield State University 2019-2014 Strategic Plan**