

Bridgewater State University
Board of Trustees Meeting
April 16, 2020
Virtual Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Trustees Durgin, Alexander, Caulfield, Benson, Denterlein, Longo, Murphy, MacCormack, Oliari, Turchon

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: President Clark; Provost Ismaili; Chief of Staff Leuenberger; Vice Presidents Gentlewarrior, Jason, Jean, Powers, Oravec, Shropshire, Molife; Acting Vice President Zuromski

Under the order suspending certain provisions of the open meeting law of the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30A, as declared on March 12, 2020 by Governor Baker, having been complied with, and a quorum of the Board virtually present, the Board of Trustees held a conference call meeting on April 16, 2020 with Chairman Durgin presiding.

Chairman Durgin called the meeting to order at 4:05pm.

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (MacCormack, Oliari) it was to approve the minutes from the Board of Trustees meeting held on April 1, 2020.
(Attachment)

EXECUTIVE

Honorary Degree Recipient – 2020

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (MacCormack, Denterlein) it was that the Board of Trustees approves the recommendation to award an Honorary Degree to Stephen F. Lynch at the University's 2020 Undergraduate Commencement Convocation as outlined in the memorandum from President Clark dated April 9, 2020.
(Attachment)

ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

Promotions to Rank of Full Professor
Committee Chair MacCormack noted thorough reviews were

completed. Provost Ismaili was pleased to bring nine candidates who have demonstrated scholarly teaching and service to the university. They are all examples of the great faculty at BSU. There are multiple layers of review during this process. All candidates have demonstrated an incredible commitment to BSU and have been wonderful instructors.

VOTED

FOR: Unanimous

CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (MacCormack, Turchon) it was that the Board of Trustees approve the candidates for Promotion to Rank of Full Professor as recommended and described in the memorandum from President Clark dated April 9, 2020. (Attachment)

Trustee Denterlein asked if there is data for the diversity of the promotions. Provost Ismaili commented they have not provided diversity data. However, the diversity of faculty is provided in the fact book. Looking at this cohort, there is some diversity. Due to the track faculty are on, there are a number of diverse backgrounds who will be eligible soon. Over the next period of time, we will see visible diversity of those faculty moving into this rank. Trustee MacCormack noted there has been an increase in the number of women and there are more diverse minority faculty; BSU is moving in this direction. Provost Ismaili acknowledged, in general, there is a focus on faculty of color. They plan to work with Wheaton and Stonehill to create a diverse faculty network.

Tenure Recommendations

Trustee MacCormack commented this group of faculty have gone through a 6-year process. Provost Ismaili commented the diversity of disciplines is present and diversity of faculty is present. He has reviewed all portfolios and there are incredible candidates. In looking at this group, there are two early tenure candidates in this pool. There is a real commitment to excellence and he thanked the people who assess and evaluate these recommendations.

VOTED

FOR: Unanimous

CARRIED

On motion duly made and seconded (MacCormack, Turchon) it was that the Board of Trustees approve the Tenure recommendations as recommended and described in the memorandum from President Clark dated April 9, 2020. (Attachment)

Trustee Turchon inquired about the two faculty who applied for early tenure. Provost Ismaili noted they have spent time in rank at other institutions and it's their choice to apply early.

PRESIDENTIAL REVIEW AND COMPENSATION

Chairman Durgin noted we are not in a position to determine a format for presidential evaluations. President Clark has not had time to devote to this due to the pandemic. This will be deferred to the June meeting. President Clark looks forward to completing his self-assessment. This is an important effort and exercise. Chairman Durgin noted they have received guidelines which are centered around the equity agenda. There may be amended guidelines within the month.

UNIVERSITY SAFETY AND SECURITY

COVID-19 Update

President Clark stated this is the third time that the Board has convened and it's remarkable how things have changed in a short amount of time. At BSU we are proud of our faculty, staff and students. The conversion to online is nothing short of remarkable. He thanked the faculty for their hard work. At the last meeting, there were 6 cases amongst our students; it is now up to 19 students and 2 staff members. All are recovering at home except for one. He has reached out to each student and acknowledged their determination and grit in getting through this. In the past 24 hours, staff members have been in touch with every single student in some form to ask how are you; what do you need; what are your intentions for registering. They will triage every inquiry that comes in. Student refunds amount to \$9.2M and have been fully dispersed as of this week. BSU was one of the first in Massachusetts to do this. As of yesterday, a new COVID-19 student emergency fund was established and \$50,000 was privately raised. There were 23 applications for assistance which came in last night. There is \$8.8M in Federal stimulus. We have not yet applied for the money but will do so by Tuesday. He is hopeful the money will arrive this year. Stipulations to the stimulus funds are: \$4.4M for student emergency funding; \$4.4M for COVID impacts. This money will be extremely important to navigate. Last week the entire legislative delegation was on a call. He thanked everyone who assisted in obtaining the stimulus money. There are 102 students currently living on campus in Crimson Hall. Housing has been offered to first responders for the towns of Bridgewater and Raynham. They have been in touch with 3 major hospitals and have offered assistance. On the Human Resources front, there is a hiring pause and overtime freeze, hourly employee reduction and student employees have been released. Graduate assistants are still engaged until the end of the academic year. Vice President Powers commented the majority of the work force is telecommuting and telework plans have been created. There are some positions that require a physical presence on campus (50-60 employees

working on campus each day). There are about 250 undergrad students working in a telecommuting fashion as well as graduate students. Temporary staff positions (about 200) may be reduced to 84 representing a 55% reduction. Recommendation will be made next week with a two-week notice. President Clark noted there was a group of full-time tenure track faculty in the hiring queue and they will continue with these hires for the fall. Provost Ismaili has communicated to Academic Affairs about the difficult decisions that have to be made and noted the future will be challenging. Next year, they will pause on any new tenure track faculty. He is committed to hiring current part-time faculty and will reduce the number of alternative professional responsibilities. They decided to pause on staff or administrative hires. Shared governance items - the university has approved two important changes for our students: an extension of withdrawal policy was extended to April 27 and the ability for students, once they have received their grades, to decide if they want to opt for a pass/no pass option. The idea is to release stress and anxiety. This agreement demonstrates the commitment between administration and faculty to do everything we can for our students.

Chairman Durgin asked how this affects student achievement for academic status (cum laude, etc.). Provost Ismaili replied there are some ways where there is no negative impact and a student can choose to not participate in the pass/no pass grade. For students applying to graduate school, most schools are aware of this and there will be no negative implication.

President Clark talked about the biggest variables: retention and enrollment; occupancy of our residence halls; state funding. Summer enrollment may be down as well. It is still early, but enrollment looks flat. Out-of-state students are up; in-state students slightly down. One thousand deposits have been received for residence halls. Budget wise, they will still project a worst case scenario.

Vice President Shropshire noted the best informed estimates will be 10% down in enrollment; 5% down in appropriation; and the closing of residence halls for fall semester, which is a big revenue hit. Overall revenue reduction is about \$36.2M. They have asked each department to look hard at their budget and can realize almost \$21M in savings. They will scale back financial aid just a little and limit new positions and position reviews. Deficit may be at \$14.8M. Projecting \$13M to roll into FY21. They are trying to hold onto full-time faculty and staff. The federal money from the CARE Act is to maintain as many employees as practical. We want to be prepared for the future as this virus will pass. Fifteen percent decline in enrollment is predicted

We are predicting about a 10% decline. The sense is that students will stay closer to home.

President Clark noted the deficit will be the highest in our history; there is a big challenge ahead of us. In terms of next steps: \$9M is in the pipeline for this fiscal year. Until the money comes in, we will be nervous.

Vice President Jason has been doing a great job with DCAMM regarding deferred monies. There is an opportunity to obtain money for deferred maintenance. Currently, Summer I classes will be fully online and they will most likely offer Summer II to be fully online as well. Unfortunately, every event for the summer will be cancelled to include: orientation, Arts for Youth, FPAC, CASE opportunities, science camps, etc. The business of the university continues. There is focus on NECHE, recruiting students, infrastructure upgrades, new programs and student research. It's important to not lose momentum.

Trustee Oliari commends efforts from everyone. Things to consider: track unemployment, people have savings that will dwindle, come up with a formula to tie the two together which may be helpful. President Clark replied looking back at the recession, there is a correlation and people tend to go to public higher education. Vice President Shropshire noted this is a good point. In 2008, there was increased enrollment. He will look at these numbers.

Chairman Durgin asked if the internship program has ground to a halt. Vice President Molife noted it has slowed significantly. All social work students are no longer in internships but there are students in Criminal Justice and a couple others who are telecommuting.

Trustee MacCormack asked if there is an opportunity for the Building Authority to refinance. Response, if students are in the residence halls, we still have debt service. President Clark said, yes, the presidents will be talking with the Building Authority about this. BSU needs to make our bond payment or else they can intercept appropriation. It would be helpful to refinance and defer by one semester if possible.

Vice President Shropshire noted there is \$3B for education on a grant basis as part of stimulus money. Stipulations, if awarded, the state has to guarantee they will not reduce funding to institutions over the next several years.

Chairman Durgin noted the dining contract will be delayed coming to the Board for a vote. Vice President Jason said Sodexo received the

first draft of the contract last Friday; their legal is backed up. She is hopeful to bring this to the Board in about 4 weeks.

Chairman Durgin said they will schedule a meeting surrounding the dining services contract as well as the priorities of President Clark.

Chairman Durgin asked committee chairs to stay in touch with divisional vice presidents and if there is anything to share, please do so.

Dr. Maria Hegbloom, MSCA Chapter President, spoke briefly. There is an enormous amount of work that went into converting to online and adjusting to this new world. Advising is taking place and every department has figured out a plan to work with the students. She thanked the administration for their cooperation with the union and particular thanks to Provost Ismaili in moving ahead to follow through with the contracts extended to tenure track faculty; this is significant and shows a commitment to full-time faculty. Despite the difficult circumstances, they are in contract negotiations. The union has put in a lot of effort into rethinking bargaining and to narrow proposals to what is really essential. Hopeful for a quick resolution.

Chairman Durgin noted he provided a draft letter from the Board to the President Clark/administration which acknowledges the herculean efforts over the past month. This university is prospering. Everyone has been affected by this and has stepped up to meet the challenges. He asked the Board to ascent to this letter. He wants everyone on campus to know the Board is part of the team and part of the effort to get through this difficult time.

On motion duly made and seconded (Longo, Alexander) it was that the meeting be adjourned (5:15pm).

VOTED
FOR: Unanimous
CARRIED

Respectfully submitted,

Davede Alexander
Secretary

Minutes prepared by:
Tracey Keif