

**WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**  
**Tuesday, November 21, 2023**  
**4:00 P.M.**  
**Wellness Center, Room 204**

**Meeting Called By:** Marina Taylor(Chair)

**Minutes:** Nikki Kapurch

**Board Members:** Marina Taylor (Chair); Lisa Colombo (Vice-Chair); Lawrence Sasso (Vice-Chair); Karen Lafond; David Tuttle; William Mosley; Dina Nichols; Amy Peterson; Maureen Power; Kaitlin Schott

**WSU Staff:** Lois Wims; Ashlynn Allain; Carl Herrin; Nikki Kapurch; Stacey Luster

All documents considered to be **drafts** until discussed and/or approved by the Board

<b>AGENDA</b>		
<b>ITEM</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
<b>1. Administrative Business</b> A. Call to Order B. Approval of the Minutes: 1. Finance & Facilities Committee - October 24, 2023* 2. Full Board Meeting- October 24, 2023* C. MSCA Chapter President Comment - 5 minutes	Marina Taylor       Erika Briesacher	       <b>1. vote required</b> <b>2. vote required</b>
<b>2. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Presentation - 15 minutes w/ Q&amp;A</b> A. Veterans Services Presentation - Dr. Stephanie Teixeira L.P.D. Director   Military Affairs and Veteran Services* a. 2023 Student Veteran Graduation & Awards Dinner Impact Statement* b. Military Affairs Strategic Plan 2023-2025*	Edgar Moros Stephanie Teixeira	A. Informational
<b>3. Sabbatical Presentation -15 minutes w/ Q&amp;A</b> <b>A. Title: "15 years of change in a New England forest: what does it mean for the atmosphere?"</b> Allison L. Dunn, Ph.D., Professor & Chair, Department of Earth, Environment, and Physics	Lois Wims Allison Dunn	A. Informational
<b>4. Academic &amp; Student Development Committee Report</b> A. November 21 Academic & Student Development Committee Meeting Packet* B. Approval of AY 2024-2025 Sabbatical Leave Proposals	Karen LaFond	A. Informational  <b>B. vote required</b>
<b>5. Administrative Updates</b> A. Report of the Chair a. Next meeting: January 9, 2023 B. Report of the Student Trustee C. Report of the President a. President's Update* b. Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE): Board Accreditation Action Notification*	Marina Taylor   Kaitlin Schott Lois Wims	   a. Informational  b. Informational
<b>6. Adjournment</b>	Marina Taylor	<b>6. vote required</b>

\*Attachments

**WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**Finance & Facilities Committee Meeting**  
**Meeting Minutes**

CHAIR: Lisa Colombo (Chair)

DATE: October 24, 2023

LOCATION: Wellness Center, Rm 204

MINUTES BY: Nikki Kapurch

TIME: 3:00 PM

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Lisa Colombo (Chair); Amy Peterson; Dina Nichols; Lawrence Sasso (Vice Chair)

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Marina Taylor

WSU STAFF: Lois Wims; Ashlynn Allain; Kathy Eichelroth; Carl Herrin; Nikki Kapurch; Julie Kazarian; Stacey Luster; Ryan Forsythe; Sathi Mitra; Tom McNamara; Maureen Stokes

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The provision of General Laws, Chapter 30A having been complied with and a quorum present, a meeting of the Finance and Facilities Committee was held on Tuesday, October 24, 2023, in room 204, located in the Wellness Center. Chair Colombo called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

Administrative Business

*APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - September 21, 2023*

Upon a motion made by Trustee Nichols and seconded by Trustee Sasso, it was

**VOTED: to approve the September 21, 2023, minutes of the Finance and Facilities Committee meeting as presented.**

One abstained - Trustee Peterson (not present at the Sept. 21 meeting)

FINANCE & FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

*FY 2023 DRAFT FINANCIAL STATEMENT AUDIT REPORT*

- Trustee Colombo called upon VP Kathy Eichelroth, who introduced Jim Johnston and Laura Pizzimenti from Bollus Lynch, LLP, to summarize the report.
- Laura walked us through the report.
- Audit the financial statements as of and for the years ended June 30, 2023, and June 30, 2022.
- Bollus Lynch, LLP, also audits the Worcester State Foundation's financial statements, and the report is included with this WSU audit.
- Management is responsible for preparing the financial statements, and the auditor's responsibility is to express opinions on the financial statements based on the audit.
- The University presents net position statements, revenues, expenses, and changes in net position and cash flows.
- New to the audit, as discussed in Note 2 to the financial statements for 2023, the University adopted GASB Statement No. 96, Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements (SBITA).

- The financial statements and related footnotes are presented separately from Management Discussion and Analysis.
- Ms. Pizzimenti handed a letter to the Finance and Facilities Committee members informing them of significant matters related to the conduct of the audit and a summary of various matters that must be communicated under auditing standards generally accepted in the United States.
- The opinion was clean. No issues.
- Are there any areas to watch as we go through this process?
  - Nothing in particular but Enrollment would be something to watch.
- Chair Colombo reported that she discussed the report in detail with both President Maloney and VP Eichelroth and thanked the team for all their hard work.
- New government accounting pronouncements GASB Statement No. 101, Compensated Absences, is effective for reporting periods beginning after December 15, 2023.

The audit was thoroughly vetted by the Finance and Facilities Committee, and upon a motion made by Trustee Nichols and seconded by Trustee Sasso, it was unanimously

**VOTED:**            **to recommend to the full Board the approval of the revised Worcester State University's FY 2023 Audited Financial Statements as prepared by the Certified Public Accounting firm of Bollus Lynch.**

*FY 2024 BUDGET MEMO AMENDMENT #1*

- Trustee Colombo opened up the meeting and called upon VP Kathy Eichelroth, to walk the trustees through the FY 2024 Budget Memo Amendment #1 that was included in the packet.
- Amendment #1 to the General Operating Budget (400) and Strategic Plan Trust Fund (410).
- This amendment correctly identifies the ARPA funds as being drawn from prior reserves and made available for balancing the FY 2024 operating budget.
- VP Eichelroth went through the FY 2024 Operating Budget identifying the breakdown of those dollars and indicating what each line item category the funds were assigned to.
- VP Eichelroth explained the process and model of the Strategic Plan trust fund that the trustees had approved at a past board meeting.

Upon a motion made by Trustee Nichols and seconded by Trustee Sasso, it was unanimously

**VOTED:**            **to recommend to the full Board the approval of the FY 2024 Budget Amendment #1 as presented.**

With there being no further business, the WSU Board of Trustees committee meeting was adjourned.

Upon a motion made by Trustee Nichols and seconded by Trustee Sasso, it was unanimously

**VOTED:**            **to adjourn the meeting at 3:52 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,



Nikki Kapurch  
Assistant Secretary, Board of Trustees



October 24, 2023

Finance and Facilities Sub-Committee  
Worcester State University  
Worcester, Massachusetts

Attention: Ms. Lisa Colombo, Finance and Facilities Sub-Committee Chair

This letter is to inform the Finance and Facilities Sub-Committee of Worcester State University (the "University") about significant matters related to the conduct of our audit as of and for the year ended June 30, 2023, so that it can appropriately discharge its oversight responsibility and we comply with our professional responsibilities.

Auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (AU-C 260, *The Auditor's Communication with Those Charged with Governance*) require the auditor to promote effective two-way communication between the auditor and those charged with governance. Consistent with this requirement, the following summarizes our responsibilities regarding the financial statement audit as well as observations arising from our audit that are significant and relevant to your responsibility to oversee the financial reporting process.

#### **Our Responsibilities with Regard to the Financial Statement Audit**

Our responsibility under auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States have been described to you in our engagement letter dated June 19, 2023. The audit of the financial statements does not relieve management or those charged with governance of their responsibilities, which are also described in that letter.

#### **Overview of the Planned Scope and Timing of the Financial Statement Audit**

We have issued a separate communication dated June 19, 2023, regarding the planned scope and timing of our audit and identified significant risks.

#### **Significant Accounting Practices, Including Policies, Estimates and Disclosures**

In our meeting with you, we will discuss our views about the qualitative aspects of the University's significant accounting practices, including significant accounting policies, significant unusual transactions, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures. The following is a list of the matters that will be discussed, including the significant estimates, which you may wish to monitor for your oversight responsibilities of the financial reporting process:

- *Financial Statement Disclosures* - We will discuss with you items as they relate to the neutrality, consistency, and clarity of the disclosures in the financial statements.
- *Adoption of, or Change in, Accounting Policies* - Management has the ultimate responsibility for the appropriateness of the accounting policies used by the University. During the year ended June 30, 2023, the University adopted GASB Statement No. 96, *Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements (SBITA)*. Under the provisions of this statement, the University was required to recognize right of use assets and the related liabilities on the statement of net position and provide certain quantitative and qualitative disclosures about long-term subscription-based IT arrangements.
- *Significant or Unusual Transactions* - We did not identify any significant or unusual transactions or significant accounting policies in controversial or emerging areas for which there is a lack of authoritative guidance or consensus.



### **Significant Accounting Practices, Including Policies, Estimates and Disclosures (continued)**

- *Alternative Treatments within Generally Accepted Accounting Principles Discussed with Management* - We did not discuss with management any alternative treatments within generally accepted accounting principles for accounting policies and practices during the current audit period.
- *Management's Judgments and Accounting Estimates* - Accounting estimates are an integral part of preparing financial statements and are based upon management's current judgment. The process used by management encompasses their knowledge and experience about past and current events and certain assumptions about future events. Management has informed us that they used all the relevant facts available to them at the time to make the best judgments about accounting estimates, and we considered this information in the scope of our audit. Estimates significant to the financial statements include the allowance for uncollectible accounts receivable, valuation and amortization of deferred service concession arrangements, pension and other post-employment benefit liabilities required by GASB 68 and 75, valuation of leased assets and the related liabilities, valuation of subscription-based IT assets and the related liabilities, and accumulated depreciation allowances for capital assets. The Finance and Facilities Sub-Committee may wish to monitor throughout the year the process used to compute and record these accounting estimates.

### **Audit Adjustments and Uncorrected Misstatements**

There were no audit adjustments made to the original trial balances presented to us to begin our audit.

We are not aware of any uncorrected misstatements other than misstatements that are clearly trivial.

### **Disagreements with Management**

We encountered no disagreements with management over the application of significant accounting principles, the basis for management's judgments on any significant matters, the scope of the audit, or significant disclosures to be included in the financial statements.

### **Consultations with Other Accountants**

We are not aware of any consultations management had with other accountants about accounting or auditing matters.

### **Other Information in Documents Containing Audited Financial Statements**

We are not aware of any other documents that contain the audited financial statements. If such documents were to be published, we would have a responsibility to determine that such financial information was not materially inconsistent with the audited statements of the University.

### **Other Matters - New Accounting Pronouncements**

GASB Statement No. 101, *Compensated Absences* is effective for reporting periods beginning after December 15, 2023. The objective of this Statement is to better meet the information needs of financial statement users by updating the recognition and measurement guidance for compensated absences, aligning such guidance under a unified model and by amending certain previously required disclosures. Management has not completed its review of the requirements of this Standard and its applicability.

### **Management Representations**

A management representation letter has been drafted and will be presented to management for signature. A copy of the executed letter will be available to the Finance and Facilities Sub-Committee when signed.

**Closing**

We will be pleased to respond to any questions you have about the foregoing. We appreciate the opportunity to continue to be of service to Worcester State University.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Board of Trustees, Finance and Facilities Sub-Committee, and management, and is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than these specified parties.

*Ballus Lynch, LLP*

**WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**  
**Meeting Minutes**

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CHAIR:	Marina Taylor (Chair)	DATE:	October 24, 2023
LOCATION:	Wellness Center, Room 204	MINUTES BY:	Nikki Kapurch
TIME:	4:00 PM		
MEMBERS PRESENT:	Lisa Colombo (Vice-Chair); Dina Nichols; William Mosley; Amy Peterson; Marina Taylor (Chair); David Tuttle; Lawrence Sasso (Vice-Chair); Kaitlin Schott		
MEMBERS ABSENT:	Karen Lafond; Maureen Power		
WSU STAFF:	Lois Wims; Ashlynn Allain; Kathy Eichelroth; Nikki Kapurch; Stacey Luster; Julie Kazarian; Tom McNamara; Maureen Stokes		

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The provision of General Laws, Chapter 30A having been complied with and a quorum present, a meeting of the Board of Trustees was held on Tuesday, October 24, 2023, in room 204, located in the Wellness Center. Chair Taylor called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

Administrative Business:

*APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - Full Board Meeting - September 26, 2023*

Upon a motion made by Trustee Mosley and seconded by Trustee Colombo, it was

**VOTED: to approve the September 26, 2023, minutes of the full Board meeting as presented.**

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION PRESENTATION

- Edgar Moros, Executive Director of Diversity, Inclusion, & Equal Opportunity introduced Frances Manocchio, Assistant Dean/Director of Student Accessibility Services, and Laura Murphy, Associate Dean for Health and Wellness.
- Asst. Dean Mannochio presented the PowerPoint presentation that was included in the packet.
  - Went over the Student Accessibility Services policies for reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities and our legal obligations.
  - Discussed the mission of the office, goals, and some of the barriers the staff is facing.
  - Went through the types of accommodations that are offered to the students. There is a significant increase in the number of housing accommodation requests, including assistance animals. 200 percent increase over the past three years.
  - An increase in the number of students connecting with SAS is a good thing because students are using the resources that are available, and those students are presenting with greater needs.
- Associate Dean Murphy presented the Counseling Center PowerPoint that was included in the packet.
  - Discussed the scope of care provided and went over who is eligible for services.



- Provided a few updates on training and clinical services and described how the counselors triage appointments.
- Talked about their mental health outreach efforts.
- Training is provided for the Residence Assistant staff, Residence Directors, and University Police.

Finance & Facilities Committee Report

Trustee Colombo, chair of the Finance and Facilities Committee, reported that the group convened today at 3 p.m. to receive the DRAFT FY 2023 Independent Audit Report and Financial Statements. Trustee Colombo reported that the Audit Report was thoroughly vetted by the committee and that Jim Johnston and Laura Pizzimenti from Bollus Lynch, LLP, reported that during the audit, they did not identify any deficiencies in internal controls that they consider to be material weaknesses. Clean audit. New to the audit, as discussed in Note 2 to the financial statements 2023, the University adopted GASB Statement No. 96, Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements (SBITA).

Upon a motion made by Trustee Nichols and seconded by Trustee Sasso, it was unanimously

**VOTED: to accept the recommendation of the Finance and Facilities Committee and approve the revised Worcester State University's FY 2023 Audited Financial Statements as prepared by the Certified Public Accounting firm of Bollus Lynch.**

VP Eichelroth walked the trustees through the budget amendment that was included in the packet.

Upon a motion made by Trustee Tuttle and seconded by Trustee Nichols, it was unanimously

**VOTED: to accept the recommendation of the Finance and Facilities Committee and approve the FY 2024 Budget Amendment #1 as presented.**

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

- Next meeting: Tuesday, November 21, 2023

REPORT OF THE STUDENT TRUSTEE

- No updates

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

- President's Update was provided in the packet.
- Extension of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, "Beyond 150: Lead, Succeed, Engage"
  - Acting President Wims references the memo that was provided in the packet from President Maloney
  - The President is seeking a two-year extension for the end date of the plan for two reasons: because we initiated the Strategic Plan late in 2020 when the campus was fully remote and because we aim to formally incorporate continuous improvement strategies into the plan. I

would add also that our accrediting agency, NECHE, has tasked us with developing a "culture of assessment," and our Strategic Plan's assessment will be Exhibit A in showing we have developed such a culture. It would behoove us to have the close date of our Plan line up with the NECHE interim report date of 2027.

- The Financial Sustainability Task Force trends will be embedded throughout all of the goals, indicating the importance of the work to the entire university.

Upon a motion made by Trustee Colombo and seconded by Trustee Sasso, it was unanimously

**VOTED: to approve the extension of the 2020- 2025 Strategic Plan through 2027 as presented.**

- 2023 Jeanne Clery Report
  - 2023 Jeanne Clery Disclosure Annual Security and Fire Safety Reports were provided in the packet as information only.
- Tom McNamara gave a brief update on this weekend's Homecoming events. Talked about the Fall Days of Giving and how the trustees can support the university and the students.
- Dean of Enrollment and Director of Admissions, Joe DiCarlo gave an Enrollment update. Positive trends for Fall 2024 in new student admissions.
- Fall 2023 DHE Early Enrollment Report (EER)
  - The report can be found in the packet and was provided as information only.
    - This report was prepared for the DHE. The EER provides an early glimpse of fall enrollment and reviews recent enrollment trends. The EER is collected annually to support planning, budget development, and public higher education advocacy.
- Provost Wims gave a brief overview of the Joint Higher Ed Committee meeting held on campus on Friday, October 20, with the executive leadership team. The joint committee is made up of Massachusetts House and Senate members. We discussed the university's needs. Following the meeting, the group was led on a 30-minute campus tour, led by students, followed by time with students and faculty.

With there being no further business, the WSU Board of Trustees meeting was adjourned.

Upon a motion made by Trustee Colombo and seconded by Trustee Nichols, it was unanimously

**VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at 5::06 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,



Nikki Kapurch

Assistant Secretary, Board of Trustees

# WSU MAVS

Military Affairs & Veteran Services  
Presentation to  
Worcester State University Board of Trustees  
November 2023





A close-up, high-angle shot of the American flag, focusing on the blue field with white stars. The flag is draped and slightly wrinkled, with the stars clearly visible. The red and white stripes are partially visible at the bottom left.

Prior to 2023



Spring 2023  
Priority one: Identify a  
Baseline



**Office of Military Affairs and Veteran Services**

**Mission The Office of Military Affairs and Veteran**

**Services serve as a central location on campus**

**for data, research, information and resources**

**that facilitate the success of student Veterans**

**and military connected persons. This office will**

**facilitate their success and sense of belonging**

**on the Worcester State University campus by**

**creating community and campus partnerships.**

**The office will continue to work collaboratively**

**with student Veterans and the campus to**

**promote WSU core values of Academic**

**Excellence, Diversity and Inclusiveness,**

**Engaged Citizenship, Open Exchange of Ideas,**

**and Civility and Integrity.**

# MISSION





Creating a diverse,  
equitable, accessible  
and inclusive  
environment can start  
with a Capital V

student Veterans





An American flag is shown waving, with the stars and stripes clearly visible. The flag is positioned on the left side of the image, and its colors are vibrant. The background of the slide is a dark, solid color.

# We Serve...

**WSU**

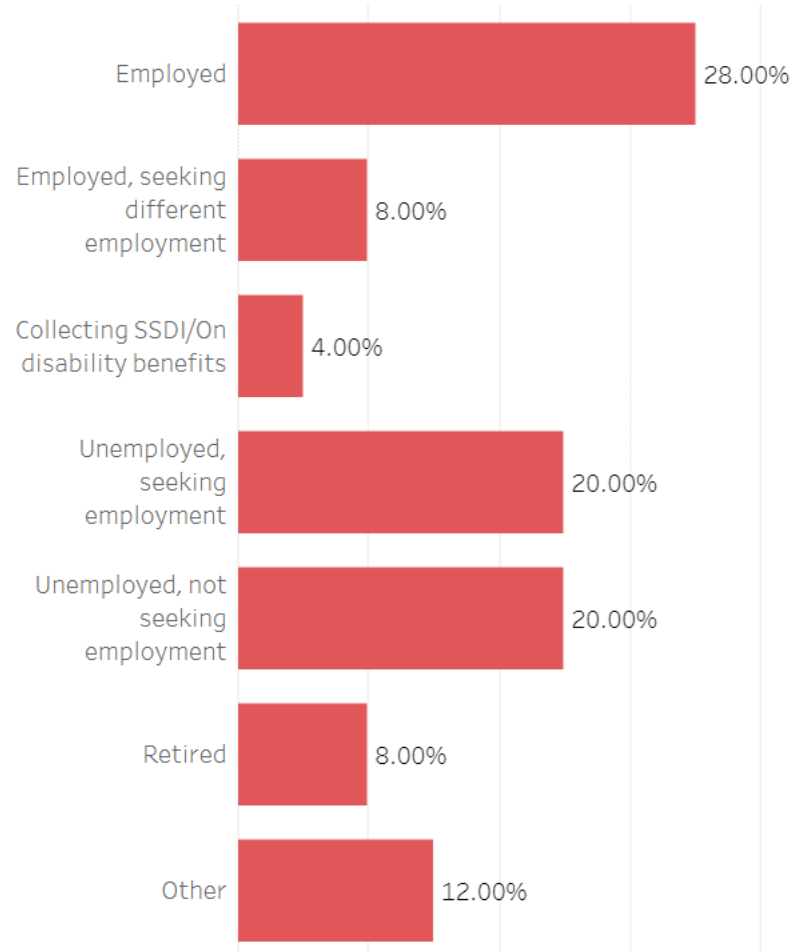
- **Student Veterans/ Service Members**
- **Dependents (children/ spouses)**
- **ROTC**
- **80+ currently, goal for our campus is the 100-150 range**

**“military-connected student”** shall mean a student who is an unemancipated person whose parent or guardian is:  
a current, reserve or former member of the United States Army, United States Navy, United States Marine Corps, United States Coast Guard, Army Nurse Corps, Navy Nurse Corps, United States Air Force, Air National Guard or Army National Guard

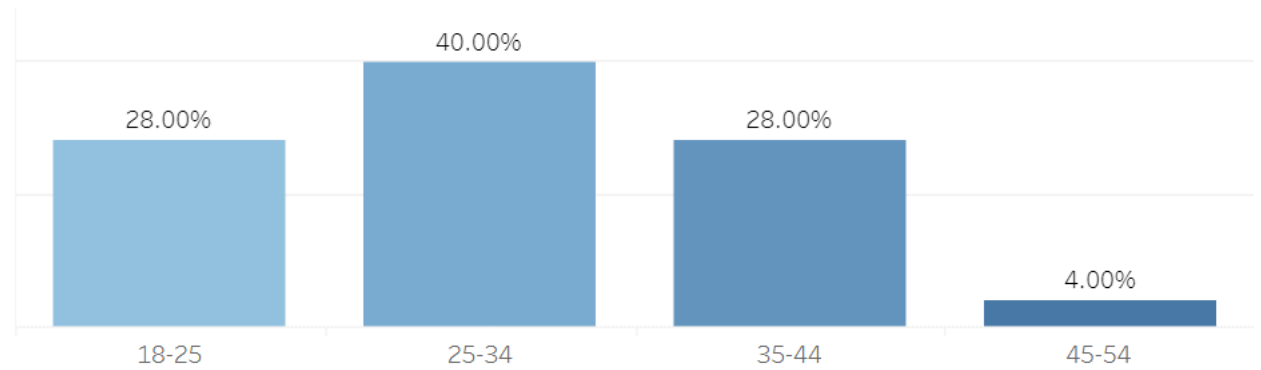
**Mass. General Laws c.71 § 99 (Added by St.2022, c.154, § 13, effective August 5, 2022)**

# Demographics

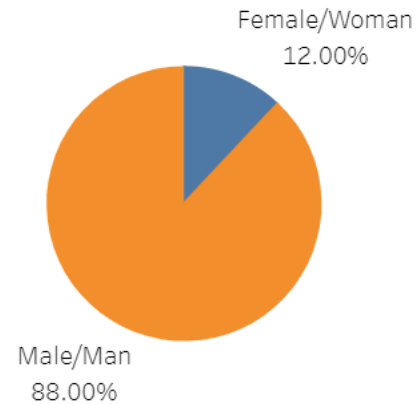
What is your current employment status



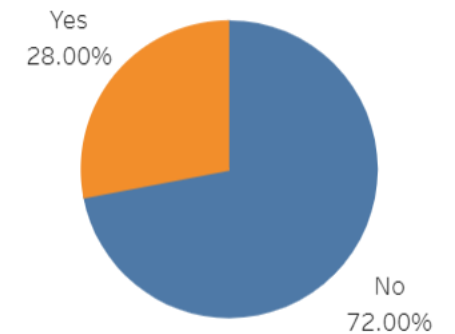
What is your current age?



What is your gender?



Do you have children?

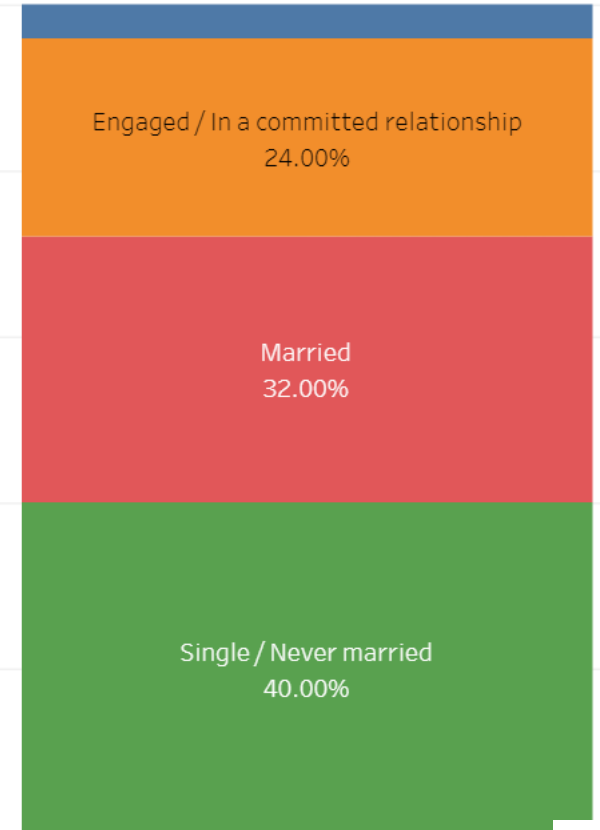


# Demographics

## What is your Ethnicity?

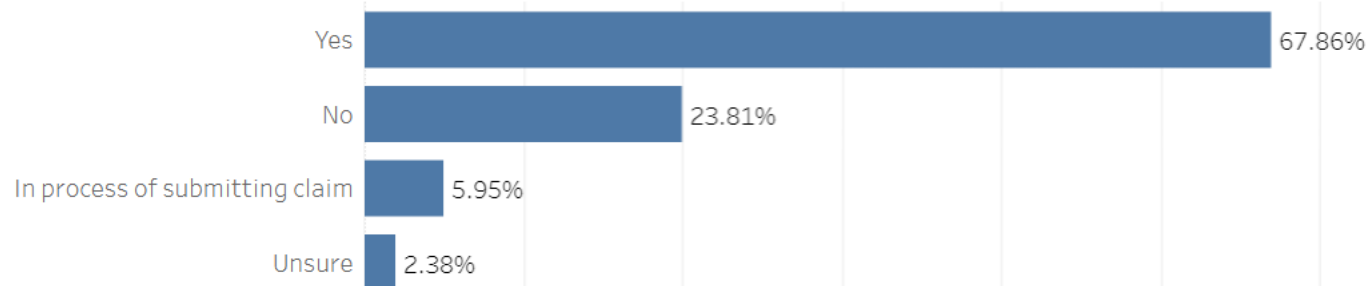
Ethnicity1	% of Total Count of Ethnicity1 along Ethnicity1	Count of Ethnicity1
African-American/Black	4.76%	1.00
Hispanic/Latino/a	14.29%	3.00
White/Caucasian	76.19%	16.00
Prefer not to say	4.76%	1.00

## What is your relationship status?



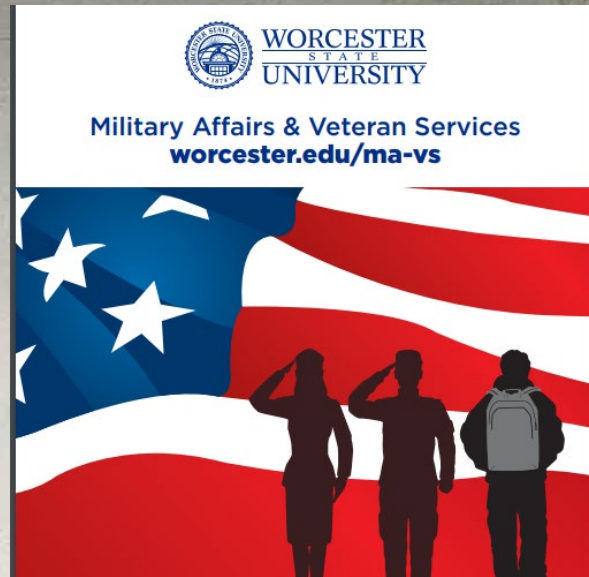
## Disability Demographics

### VA Disability Rating





- Partnered with Admissions
- Partnered with Colleague Team
- Partnered with Marketing
- Advising Team
- Academics to explore potential of having priority registration for student Veterans and ROTC students (in progress)
- Exploring with Advancement how to fund some programing and workshop initiatives in the office (in progress)



# Retention Efforts

# Retention Efforts

- Student Veterans of America Chapter at WSU & Military Connected Student Group; Promoting student leadership development opportunities proactively, inclusively, and equitably
- WSU military connected student research
- **Military Friendly Designation- 2 year goal**



Assumption (Top 10), QCC (Silver, 2022), Fitchburg State University (silver), Framingham State University (Yellow Ribbon)



# Inaugural Student Veteran Graduation Dinner

**\$7,000** in donations

- Decorations
- Full meal
- Two Guest Speakers
- (2) \$1,000 Awards





## **Guest List:**

- **15 Graduating Student Veterans & their families**
- **President Maloney**
- **Senator Gobi**
- **Senator Kennedy**
- **Senator Moore**
- **Representative Kushmerek**
- **Student Affairs VP & Associate Dean**
- **2 Guest Speakers**





- ESTIMATED/GOALS	- ACTUAL
- 25% graduate attendance	- <b>62% attendance</b>
- 25 total (families/ staff included)	- <b>48 in attendance, room at capacity</b>
- 2 guests of honor (Speaker/ legislators/ President)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>2 guest speakers</b></li> <li>- <b>WSU President</b></li> <li>- <b>3 State Senators</b></li> <li>- <b>1 State Representative</b></li> </ul>

**“Annual check-ins...I didn’t know any student Veterans until this event”**

**“A welcoming mingle (dinner) for student Veterans to get to know each other upon entering WSU, that way a sense of community is build from the start and is solidified for events like these!”**

***Thank you to Advancement, Chartwells, Student Affairs VP Julie Kazarian, Associate Dean Laurie Murphy, School Certifying Official Cherie Milosh for your support!***





**11<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER**

**VETERANS DAY**



**HONORING ALL WHO SERVED**

**Veterans Day Expo held November 9<sup>th</sup>  
Co-Sponsored by the National Guard**



# Federal Military Education Benefits



Data based on fall 2013- spring 2022

Total Amount Military Connected Students Invested in WSU  
**\$4,317,968.44**

Average Annually Invested  
**\$479, 774.27**



# **How can student Veterans benefit from Board of Trustees Support?**

- **Support to implement change, and obtain resources to gain Military Friendly Designation**
- **Next Budget Cycle considering reinvesting a percentage of the Federal Veterans Education Benefits**
- **Support student Veteran Best Practice initiatives which will increase overall retention and graduation rates and close achievement gaps**
- **Support Opening a larger Lounge & Center that can host our off campus partners, WSU partners, military connected community building events, educational workshop opportunities for the WSU community, military connected club and & Student Veterans of America meetings, resources, social gatherings, study, and relaxation**
- **Attend our events, Please consider this your open invitation!**



A black and white photograph of a person's leg and foot on a paved surface. The person is wearing dark trousers and a dark shoe. A long, dark shadow of the person is cast across the pavement from the upper left towards the lower right. The text is overlaid in blue on the image.

Thank you in advance for your  
support of our current and  
future student Veterans and  
military connected students





Questions?







**WORCESTER**  
S T A T E  
**UNIVERSITY**

## Office of Military Affairs & Veteran Services

### Student Veteran Graduation & Awards Dinner Impact Statement

#### **Relevance**

Historically Worcester State University has been a leader in education for the Central Massachusetts community. By supporting the Inaugural Veterans Graduation & Awards dinner you were able to support WSU take a step forward with strengthening the connection with student Veterans. Additionally, the funds were used to demonstrate appreciation for the balancing that our student Veterans undertake (military service and academics) by funding two awards. One of the recipients will be returning to WSU this fall as a member of our graduate programs and using the funds to help further her WSU education even further. Military culture at its core is about connectiveness and support, this event hopes to be just the first in a way we replicate that experience on campus. Strengthening the Office of Military Affairs & Veteran Services with funding allows the office to hold meaningful gatherings that create a support structure not only between administrators and students but also within their student Veteran cohort.

This event provided student Veterans an opportunity in a smaller setting than commencement offers, to celebrate with each other and their families the accomplishments, balance, grit and determination they overcame to graduate. Each student was presented with a state citation from the Senators, as well as a military cord and stole (commencement regalia). Additionally, two student Veterans were recognized for their academic accomplishments here at WSU with an award as well as funding supplied from the grant.

Looking forward the economic value for supporting Veteran cohorts would be increased enrollment in Veteran, dependent, and ROTC students. Those using earned education benefits from service time or scholarship ROTC students have guaranteed financial. When supported through programing and build a community, they are more likely complete their degree at WSU instead of transferring. The leading cause of student Veterans to leave school or transfer is perceived lack of support from the campus. Creating this community will also increase the productivity of the students by engaging them and allowing them to add value through Veteran spaces and programing on campus.

#### **Key moments according to the student Veterans**

- "Having a younger Veteran speaker made the event that much more welcoming and relatable"
- "Every event has improvements to work on but for this being the first of its kind at WSU, I think the program ran smoothly"



Office of Military Affairs & Veteran Services

- "Inviting faculty was a really nice touch, I think adding a place where the students could include which faculty, they would like to invite would be a good addition for future years"
- "Meeting the Senator and having conversations; getting cords, awards, dinner"
- "Having my family meet with the professors that had a large impact on my time at WSU was nice. My wife had heard a lot about each other them and my parents enjoyed hearing about my classroom behavior"

**Statistics**

- 100% of the Veterans would attend a future event from the office if it was available for alumni
- 80% reported both date and time of event worked for them
- 20% would not attend commencement, and additional 20% were undecided
- 40% would like more faculty to attend dinner, but only 20% wanted faculty as part of the speaking program
- 100% enjoyed the full dinner experience

**Veteran Feedback on what events would have been beneficial at WSU**

- "Annual check-ins...I didn't know any student Veterans until this event"
- "First year student event so we can connect with others like us"
- "A welcoming mingle (dinner) for student Veterans to get to know each other upon entering WSU that way a sense of community is built from the start and is solidified for events like these!"
- "Social gatherings that work on teamwork and getting to know one another"
- "A Veteran orientation/ meet and greet could be nice for Veterans to meet each other"

**Goals/ Actual**

- ESTIMATED/GOALS	- ACTUAL
- 25% graduate attendance	- 62% attendance
- 25 total (families/ staff included)	- 48 in attendance, room at capacity
- 2 guests of honor (Speaker/ legislators/ President)	- 2 guest speakers
	- WSU President
	- 3 State Senators
	- 1 State Representative





**WORCESTER**  
S T A T E  
**UNIVERSITY**

Office of Military Affairs & Veteran Services

**In the News**

The below link is of the news article about the event, including pictures.

<https://news.worcester.edu/university-local-legislators-celebrate-accomplishments-of-graduating-student-veterans/>

**Event Photos**

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1shDJES0R7XoMD5AWh0Pt\\_bQYQLQVfiOP?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1shDJES0R7XoMD5AWh0Pt_bQYQLQVfiOP?usp=sharing)

**Respectfully,**

Coming to Worcester State University campus in early 2023 I wanted to ensure that the student Veterans who graduated felt honored by the university. Thank you for the grant to allow me to celebrate the end of their journey here. My hope is that we can build relationships that allow myself and this office to not only celebrate, but support and foster the journey of the Veterans, dependents, ROTC and other military individuals moving forward. Without your support this event could not have been possible.

*Dr. Stephanie Teixeira*

Director of Military Affairs & Veteran Services

**Worcester State University**  
**Office of Military Affairs & Veteran Services**  
**Strategic Plan**

The framework mirrors Worcester State University's Strategic Plan (2020-2025). This framework was developed by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee incorporating equity thought five of the established goals. The office of Military Affairs will be responsible for curating pilot stage programing & research and take that into a sustainable, integral part of campus.



**WSU Goal 1 Academic Excellence and Distinction** Ensure metrics are created to track students and implemented to promote academic success and national distinction in Veteran academic institutions



**WSU Goal 2 Student Support and Success** Curate specific orientations, leadership opportunities, military culture workshops, on and off campus engagement activities



**WSU Goal 3 Marketing and Enrollment** Increase military, Veterans, and military connected student enrollment, retention, and program completion leading to career success post-graduation.



**WSU Goal 4 Community Engagement and Public Good** Increase WSU visibility in the Worcester community, partake in Veteran events and promote community engagement on campus



**WSU Goal 5 People and Culture** Increase engagement between military and veteran faculty, staff, and students both on the campus and in the Worcester community

\*Bold items are from WSU strategic plan; non-bold items are Department specific



## **Vision**

Worcester state University will be the premier education destination for student Veterans and military affiliated persons.

## **Worcester State University Mission**

Worcester State University Champions academic excellence in a diverse, student- centered environment that fosters scholarship, creativity, and global awareness. A Worcester state education equips students with knowledge and skills necessary for lives of professional accomplishment, engaged citizenship, and intellectual growth.

## **Office of Military Affairs and Veteran Services Mission**

The Office of Military Affairs and Veteran Services serve as a central location on campus for data, research, information and resources that facilitate the success of student Veterans and military connected persons. This office will facilitate their success and sense of belonging on the Worcester State University campus by creating community and campus partnerships. The office will continue to work collaboratively with student Veterans and the campus to promote WSU core values of Academic Excellence, Diversity and Inclusiveness, Engaged Citizenship, Open Exchange of Ideas, and Civility and Integrity.



**WSU Goal 1 Academic Excellence and Distinction** Ensure metrics are created to track students and implemented to promote academic success and national distinction in Veteran academic institutions

**WSU STRATEGY 1.1** Promote University-wide innovation in curricular program offerings, and expand options and accessible modalities for course offerings and course completion

**DEPARTMENT STRATEGY SUPPORTING 1.1** Increase the knowledge for faculty and administrators around the limitations of 100% online learning in order to maintain Veteran education options. Ensure that when academic continues to curate new programs, they keep in mind that offering degrees/certificates in multiple modalities offers the most student centric experience including supporting the military connected students.

**JUSTIFICATION** The federal law guiding Veteran's education benefits places limitations on aspects of the benefit depending on format of a class. In order for a military connected person using benefits to utilize all aspects of the earned education benefit (tuition & housing) the certifying official must report if classes are in person or online. The creation of 100% online degree program options without the option to take the degree hybrid or in person, could create an equity access issue in regards to Veteran & military connected persons using federal education benefits by impacting the housing component eligibility.

**WSU STRATEGY 1.2** Support and celebrate excellent teaching, and expand opportunities for broadening pedagogical expertise through both internal and external professional development

**DEPARTMENT STRATEGY SUPPORTING 1.2** Curate internal workshops for staff and faculty to help expand the collective campus knowledge of student Veterans. Attend internal and external professional development opportunities, when possible, partake in any panel events to support and celebrate WSU's excellence.

**JUSTIFICATION** To date no research, programing, or workshops have been conducted on WSU's campus. It is important to create a baseline and then continue to support providing education opportunities for the WSU community as well as the Director keeping on top of the latest published research in student Veteran affairs.



**WSU STRATEGY 1.3** Leverage the University's location to create distinctive academic and leadership opportunities

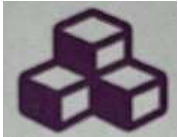
**DEPARTMENT STRATEGY SUPPORTING 1.3** The university is located centrally in Massachusetts' second largest city. This allows the opportunities for connecting students with resources while they are in school and then prepare them for graduation. Collaborating with Career Services, the joint department heads can create a "road-map" of the student's academic journey into the career they are looking for while assisting with preparations for employment.

**JUSTIFICATION** Working in a collaborative fashion is what is going to make the difference for the students of WSU. Other universities have a one stop shop method, and even with that as an establish best practice policy the university does not currently have a specific Veteran service center. WSU currently as identified an area in corridor of the Student Center that is known as the Veterans Lounge. When speaking about a Veteran service center, it is referring to a separate Veteran/Military connected dedicated space for fostering positive experiences while at WSU; this would include private spaces (to be used for meetings with accessibility services, visiting VA reps, benefit/registration/advising questions, the Director), as well as common spaces for the students to relax (which may include a small kitchen area, couches, TV, public computer), and space for any VA work studies students. Establishing working partnerships across campus will be how we can leverage the services we have within the current space constraints.

**WSU STRATEGY 1.4** Offer a vibrant and rigorous general education curriculum that supports the liberal arts in a 21<sup>st</sup> century context

**DEPARTMENT STRATEGY SUPPORTING 1.4** Partner with faculty as they are curating diversity, history, and leadership courses with the purpose of creating an understanding of the wealth of life experiences and training Veterans bring to these classes. Create transparency for Credits for Prior Learning regarding Veterans.

**JUSTIFICATION** The Office of Military Affairs & Veteran Services is looking to partner with faculty to ensure the greatest cultural competency in classrooms regarding this population of students. The military has the most comprehensive leadership programs in the world, these students then enter higher education and that experience is often discounted as not "formal" training. By removing the stigma of military training, faculty can value the student Veterans for their life experiences in a way that the Veteran is comfortable with, and facilitate cultural competency. The current published research states that in classroom interactions are a main contributing factor in a Veterans decision to continue attending a course/institution. By creating transparency with Credits for Prior Learning it also provides faculty to opportunity to understand why many Veterans come in as transfer students.



## WSU Goal 2 Student Support and Success

Curate specific orientations, leadership opportunities, military culture workshops, on and off campus engagement activities

**WSU STRATEGY 2.1** Increase overall retention and graduation rates and close achievement gaps

**DEPARTMENT STRATEGY SUPPORTING 2.1** Collaborate with Enrollment Management team to update admissions policies for Veterans, including marketing materials, and the transfer credit evaluation. Enrollment Managements Retention office and the Department of Military Affairs will collaborate on how to close achievement gaps for the Veteran population.

**JUSTIFICATION** Cultivating a collaborative environment with the Enrollment Management team will be important as the success of Goal 2 overlaps with their team. Initial meetings have been conducted with the Enrollment Management team including an informal meeting with the VP who is in support of better serving the student Veteran and military population.

**WSU STRATEGY 2.2** Promote student leadership development opportunities proactively, inclusively, and equitably

**DEPARTMENT STRATEGY SUPPORTING 2.2** Attain Veteran work studies, create leadership opportunities for those positions that support the military connected students of WSU.

**JUSTIFICATION** Published best practices include Veterans in leadership positions within student organizations, and mentoring increase the retention of both students. It is also well documented that the DoD out spends all other federal departments on leadership training, having VA work studies will use this



**WSU STRATEGY 2.3** Embrace student centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative

**DEPARTMENT STRATEGY SUPPORTING 2.3** The Office of Military Affairs and Veteran Services will maintain a Veteran centric lens when creating educational, and social programing.

**JUSTIFICATION** Veterans come to higher education with what is known as a “two-worlds” theory, this means that they straddle the line between military culture and a more relaxed academic community. Taking that into consideration when creating events will ensure the greatest number of participants taking advantage of the program offerings.

**WSU STRATEGY 2.4** Ensure all students, including non-traditional student and distance learners, have full and equitable access to the academic resources, support services, and technology they need

**DEPARTMENT STRATEGY SUPPORTING 2.4** Collaborate monthly with the library regarding resources and highlight stories of Veterans and military service. This is already in progress where monthly the Department of Military Affairs is providing the library with published titles to acquire or highlight. Collaborate with Accessibility Services to facilitate the needs of the students to the best ability legally allowed.

**JUSTIFICATION** This partnership is between the Directors of Military Affairs and the Director of the Library. This costs zero monies out of the Departments budget, but allows for published experiences of military service to be highlighted monthly. The Director of Military Affairs choices titles that match with federally celebrate months, example is February is Black history month, so February’s titles intersect between Black history and military experience. By changing the books highlighted every month, it creates renewed interest and for those who read the publications expanded knowledge and understanding of military experiences and culture. The partnerships between Accessibility Services Director and the Director of Military Affairs is currently in progress to navigate how to best accomplish reaching Veteran students.

**WSU STRATEGY 2.5** Adopt a mentoring model of advising and ensuring faculty and staff are appropriately trained to deliver effective support to a more diverse student body

**DEPARTMENT STRATEGY SUPPORTING 2.5** The department will work collaboratively with advice to educate them on Veteran transition services and how advising may impact their benefits. Additionally creating a Veteran specific advisor or an advisor in the Military Affairs department to assist students who are self-registering is a long-term strategy.

**JUSTIFICATION** The university currently has advising living with both an Academic Advising department and faculty as part of their contract. However, Veteran's education benefits are specific on what courses they will cover and it is important that those who are advising anyone using Veteran education benefits understands what may impact them. Currently the Registrars office has to recertify students who change courses to do this advising gap. Education of advising and the federal benefits is the only solution.





### WSU Goal 3 Marketing and Enrollment

Increase military, Veterans, and military connected student enrollment, retention, and program completion leading to career success post-graduation.

**WSU STRATEGY 3.1** Raise regional and national visibility and garner recognition for academic excellence, value, and impact

**DEPARTMENT STRATEGY SUPPORTING 3.1** Achieve status of a Military Friendly designation for the campus.

**JUSTIFICATION** Due to past predatory practices the federal law bans targeting military personal in marketing of an institution, what is allowed is closely monitored by Department of Veteran Affairs audits and can impact an institution's ability to accept Veteran education benefits. Military Friendly designation is a yearly designation a school can earn by providing campus data, Veteran programming, academic, and graduation rates to name a few topics covered in the survey. If an institution gets granted Military Friendly for an academic year it can be put on all electronic and published materials. It is a legal way to gain recognition for academics and student services on campus, and market this federal recognition.

**WSU STRATEGY 3.2** More effectively differentiate WSU from its peers, drawing particular attention to advantage associate with its location

**DEPARTMENT STRATEGY SUPPORTING 3.2** Compare WSU from its local peers in Worcester and closest state school peers. Utilize the comparison tool from the Department of Education. By understanding comparative data, the department will be able to fill in those service gaps from other institutions allowing WSU to have an advantage. Since WSU does not have a specific Veteran center it will be important to collaborate across other departments to pull of initiatives during the year to stream line processes (admissions, registrar, advising, accessibility services).

**JUSTIFICATION** The closest state school is only about twenty minutes away on the highway. That causes a financial difference when it comes to the housing allowance for a person whose benefit includes it. Housing allowance is not something we can change at the university level, but additional monthly finances is a motivating factor for potential students. This is why it is important to make

investments in the relationships with the faculty across the campus, and invest in research and programming to keep the student services at WSU superior to our peers.

**WSU STRATEGY 3.3** Increase the diversity of the faculty and staff to better reflect the WSU student body and applicant pool

**DEPARTMENT STRATEGY SUPPORTING 3.3** Hire VA work studies, expand the Directors role to full time, identify faculty/ staff who have prior military connections who chose to self-disclosure for the purpose of showing the diversity in the faculty & administration.

**JUSTIFICATION** The department of Military Affairs is not included in the hiring process of staff or faculty. However, if approved to be a VA work study site then the work studies would have to be using benefits and thus being Veterans or dependents.

**WSU STRATEGY 3.4** Expand presence in the local secondary education and community college sectors

**DEPARTMENT STRATEGY SUPPORTING 3.4** Build a connection with Quinsigamond Community College's Veteran Affairs office, invite their military students to WSU for events sponsored by the department of Military Affairs.

**JUSTIFICATION** Initial conversations with the Director at QCC has already taken place. The director at QCC & WSU have a spoken agreement to attempt and create alignment between the two institutions which would benefit WSU if QCC's graduating Veterans start visualizing themselves as part of the WSU campus. It will be important to attempt to host a majority of these events to create the most opportunity for the students to visit the campus.

**WSU STRATEGY 3.5** Position and promote WSU as a first-choice university for students from traditionally under-represented groups

**DEPARTMENT STRATEGY SUPPORTING 3.5** Ensure marketing and recruitment materials are translated into Spanish. The Director will invest in the non-traditional community at WSU, especially academics. Invest in community connections and resources.

**JUSTIFICATION** The most recent student Veteran climate survey published by Student Veterans of America was on the 2021 Academic year and included 25 higher education institutions in Massachusetts. Of the data collected on this population 40% of the students fell between 25-34, and another 28% aged 35-44 (same as 18–25-year-old), additionally 28% self-reported having children.



**WSU STRATEGY 3.6** Invest resources necessary to grow enrollment in graduate and online programs

**DEPARTMENT STRATEGY SUPPORTING 3.6** Expand education and transitioning programs to include how VA education benefits can pay for graduate school and workforce development programs.

**JUSTIFICATION** The most recent student Veteran climate survey published by Student Veterans of America was on the 2021 Academic year and included 25 higher education institutions in Massachusetts. Of the data collected on this population 86.46% of Veteran students were full time, only 3.13% of students report attending a 100% online program or college. Based on published research fully online programs are not supported by the Veteran community or the VA (housing benefit automatically is cut in half). Investing in on ground undergraduate and graduate programs will be more attractive to Veterans now and in the future.



## **WSU Goal 4 Community Engagement and Public Good**

**Increase WSU visibility in the Worcester community, partake in Veteran events and promote community engagement on campus**

**WSU STRATEGY 4.1** Expand and deepen connections between the community and WSU's academic departments, centers, and institutes

**& WSU STRATEGY 4.2** Foster ongoing interaction between members of the University community and members of the Worcester community

**DEPARTMENT STRATEGY SUPPORTING 4.1 & 4.2** Expand connections between administrative and academic offices creating a point of contact for Veterans. Invite WSU's military connect students/ staff/ faculty to community engagement events in support of Veterans in the Worcester community. Director will connect with affinity groups and boards that support non traditional learning on campus, as well as out reach to the Worcester Veteran serving boards.

**JUSTIFICATION** Veterans seek out places they feel they belong; they crave the community they had built in during their military career. In order to create some culture awareness and community for them on WSU campus we need to start making investments both on and off the campus.

**WSU STRATEGY 4.3** Expand relationships with businesses in Worcester and beyond to expand the pipeline for internships, practica, co-ops, and post-graduate employment options

**DEPARTMENT STRATEGY SUPPORTING 4.3** Network with existing Veteran serving operations in Worcester including Vets Inc. and the VA. Identify Veteran friendly companies with job opportunities in collaboration with Career Services.

**JUSTIFICATION** Career Services specializes in assisting students prepare for that next step post-graduation. The Director of Military Affairs and Career Services have spoken about specialized conversations with Veterans starting at the beginning of their education at



WSU and continuing until graduation so they continue to see options available to them. This will be especially important if they change majors. Military jobs don't always translate into a civilian job, it is impressive to have conversations with Veterans so they can clearly envision themselves in the civilian world in a new career for successful transitions from education to the civilian workforce.

**WSU STRATEGY 4.4** Establish WSU as a research and policy hub where faculty, staff, and students actively engage in developing solutions to meet regional challenges

**DEPARTMENT STRATEGY SUPPORTING 4.4** Establish a baseline for the status of Veterans on WSU campus. Create and implement research and metrics to evaluate program initiatives. When appropriate publish findings on research, or on WSU successes in the Veteran education space.

**JUSTIFICATION** Student Veterans is not well studied on individual campuses, most data is collected by national institutions (SVA, VA). Publishing the success WSU has with Veteran students is another way to promote the university on three different fronts (research, publishing on topic of Student Veterans, upward enrollment trend).



## WSU Goal 5 People and Culture

Increase engagement between military and veteran faculty, staff, and students both on the campus and in the Worcester community

**WSU STRATEGY 5.1** Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups

**DEPARTMENT STRATEGY SUPPORTING 5.1** Expand Veteran specific program offerings, promote military culture fluency on campus.

**JUSTIFICATION** Evaluating WSU from a “two-worlds theory” and/ or a Veteran Critical Theory (VCT) looks at structures and systems that affect the Veteran population by challenging the perceptions of civilians. Most of WSU are civilian staff/faculty/students, without looking at the environment through a Veteran centric lens it will be difficult to create a welcoming and supportive environment for the military connected students.

**WSU STRATEGY 5.3** Continue to equip and encourage all faculty and staff to address the diverse and evolving needs of a changing student body

**DEPARTMENT STRATEGY SUPPORTING 5.3** Create a staff/ faculty workshop on the topic of student Veterans.

**JUSTIFICATION** A longitudinal study conducted by Student Veterans of America, of over 7,169 faculty and staff members across 20 institutions showed statistically significant increase in participants military cultural competency and mental health skills; 44% reported an increase number of student Veterans they approached to discuss concerns with and make appropriate referrals on campus to other departments.

**WSU STRATEGY 5.4** Promote greater unity, communication and sense of institutional pride across campus

**DEPARTMENT STRATEGY SUPPORTING 5.4** Expand internal, cross-divisional awareness of the department and celebrate accomplishments of the office and Veteran students across campus.

**JUSTIFICATION** Increased visibility for the Department, promote persistence, support retention numbers.



**WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**Academic and Student Development Meeting**  
**Tuesday, November 21, 2023**  
**3:00 P.M.**  
**Wellness Center, Room 204**

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**Meeting Called By:** Karen LaFond (Chair)

**Minutes:** Nikki Kapurch

**Board Members:** Karen LaFond (Chair); William Mosley; Maureen Power (Vice Chair); Lawrence Sasso;  
Kaitlin Schott

**WSU Staff:** Lois Wims; Ashlynn Allain; Carl Herrin; Nikki Kapurch; Stacey Luster

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All documents considered to be **drafts** until discussed and/or approved by the Board

<b>AGENDA</b>		
<b>ITEM</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
1. <i>Administrative Business</i> A. Call to Order	Karen LaFond	
2. <i>Academic and Student Development Committee Report</i> A. President memo to BOT* B. Provost memo to President* C. Sabbatical Summary and Proposal Summaries PowerPoint* D. Approval of AY 2024-2025 Sabbatical Leave Proposals	Karen LaFond Lois Wims	A. Informational B. Informational C. Informational  <b>D. vote required</b>
3. <i>Administrative Updates</i> A. Other Business	Karen LaFond	
4. <i>Adjournment</i>	Karen LaFond	4. <b>vote required</b>

\*Attachments



**WORCESTER**  
S T A T E  
**UNIVERSITY**

President's Office  
Phone: 508-929-8020  
Fax: 508-929-8191  
Email: [bmaloney@worchester.edu](mailto:bmaloney@worchester.edu)

TO: Members, WSU Board of Trustees

FROM: Barry M. Maloney, President

RE: Sabbatical Leaves AY 2023 - 2025

DATE: October 17, 2023

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I am pleased to concur with the recommendation of Provost Wims and I am forwarding to you fifteen (15) proposals for sabbatical leave.

This year there were a total of fifteen proposals submitted and one is recommended for the full year of 2024-2025, four are recommended for the fall of 2024, and ten for the spring of 2025.

The department chairs have affirmed that the individual study for each candidate will contribute to the respective department's course offerings. Also, I concur with Dr. Wims that each area of study will add significantly to their professional development as a scholar and teacher, and will benefit Worcester State University and its students.

Enclosed is a copy of Dr. Wims' recommendation and a brief summary of the proposed sabbatical projects.



# WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Phone: 508-929-8038

Fax: 508-929-8187

TO: President Barry Maloney  
FROM: Lois A. Wims, Provost  
DATE: October 16, 2023  
RE: Sabbatical Recommendations AY 24/25

**APPROVED**

OCT 18 2023

**BARRY M. MALONEY  
PRESIDENT**

I recommend the following sabbaticals for the 24/25 Academic Year

<b>Full Year:</b>	Sara Young	Education
<b>Fall 24:</b>	Alexandra Burgess	Psychology
	Michael Gesin	History and Political Science
	Caitlin Krul	Mathematics
	Yan Hu	Biology
<b>Spring 25:</b>	Mark Beaudry	Criminal Justice
	Maura Collins	Biology
	Carlos Fontes	Communication
	Joanne Gallagher-Worthley	Occupational Therapy
	Robert W. Smith	History and Political Science
	Elizabeth Siler	Business Administration and Economics
	Champika Soysa	Psychology
	Hansun To	Mathematics
	Thomas Conroy	Urban Studies
	Heather Treseler	English





# SABBATICAL LEAVES

## 2024-2025

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# SABBATICAL PROCESS AT WSU

- Sabbatical leave provides an opportunity for a period of study and research for full-time faculty after every six full years of faculty service to WSU.
- Sabbaticals serve as an important component of faculty professional development, ensuring that faculty members stay current in their fields and advance their scholarship, enhancing their contribution to the students and the university.
- Eligibility for sabbatical leave is explained in the collective bargaining agreement (Article XV, A-F.)
- Sabbatical proposals are submitted by eligible faculty members to their department chairs each October 1st. Those who are department chairs submit directly to the Provost.
- Chairs forward their recommendation to the Provost. The Provost then reviews the proposals and recommends approval or denial to the President, who submits those recommended to the Board of Trustees for approval at the November Board meeting.
- If approved, faculty may also choose to defer to a later semester by notifying the President in writing of their intention to defer. Deferral is possible for six semesters from the award.

# Prior Year Deferrals

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- Fifteen (15) sabbaticals are presented with a recommendation for approval by the Board of Trustees.
- Under an MOU with the faculty union, some 11 sabbaticals awarded by the BOT will be taking place in the 2024/2025 academic year along with these
- These will be the last of the COVID-era deferrals



# REVIEW OF SABBATICAL APPLICATIONS

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- Faculty on sabbatical leave for one semester receive their full salary during the period of the leave.
- Those on full year sabbatical leave, receive one-half salary for the full year.
- The cost to the institution for awarding sabbatical leave is for hiring part time, adjunct faculty to teach some of the courses that the faculty member on leave would have taught. Typically, not every course that would have been taught is offered during the sabbatical semester because some elective type courses can be postponed and taught during a later semester. Chairs are asked to certify that the department can sustain the courses needed in the absence of the faculty member.
- Recipients of a sabbatical commit in writing to return to the institution for a period twice the length of the sabbatical and will be responsible to reimburse the university should they not return for the required timeframe.
- Recipients also must report on the sabbatical activities upon their return.

# ESTIMATED COST FOR 2024-2025

- Approximately 32 course sections will need to be covered by adjuncts for the sabbaticals. This year chairs were asked to focus on essential courses needing coverage only and are responding to increased scheduling efficiency.
- Sections are offered based on student demand, not on faculty availability, and the number of courses offered each spring are lower than fall semesters with approximately a 2 to 5% drop in the need for adjunct coverage in the spring. Given that more than half of the proposed sabbaticals are for the spring semester, the cost may be less than estimated.
- Average cost of \$6,000 per section, this equals \$192,000 for these.
- Funds will be part of the FY 25 budget.

# OVERVIEW OF SABBATICAL PROPOSALS RECOMMENDED TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Semester	Faculty Member	Department
Fall 2024	Alexandra Burgess	Psychology
Fall 2024	Michael Gesin	History/Political Science
Fall 2024	Yan Hu	Biology
Fall 2024	Caitlin Krul	Mathematics



# FALL 2024 | ALEXANDRA BURGESS

## PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT

*Are we asking the right questions about  
Perfectionism?*

- Comprehensive literature review
- Probing quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis of perfectionism
- Potential student research opportunities

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FALL 2024 | MICHAEL GESIN  
HISTORY/POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

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*“Holocaust Case Study: Genocide in Ukraine  
and Transnistria”*

- National archive research with Romania, Ukraine, and Odessa
- Completion of a book incorporating these case studies with four completed ones

FALL 2024 | YAN HU  
BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

*“Developing New Cures for Animal Intestinal  
Parasitic Roundworm and Plant Root  
Nematode Infections”*

- Collaboration with UMass Chan Medical School Research group
- Gaining parasitology research techniques



FALL 2024 | CAITLIN KRUL  
MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT

*“Improving Math Instruction for Pre-Service  
Elementary Teachers”*

- Preparation of an activity guide free resource to pre-service teachers
- Scholarly article regarding math anxiety solutions

# OVERVIEW OF SABBATICAL PROPOSALS RECOMMENDED TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Semester	Faculty Member	Department
Spring 2025	Mark Beaudry	Criminal Justice
Spring 2025	Maura Collins	Biology
Spring 2025	Tom Conroy	Urban Studies
Spring 2025	Carlos Fontes	Communication
Spring 2025	Elizabeth Siler	Business Administration & Economics
Spring 2025	Robert Smith	History/Political Science
Spring 2025	Champika Soysa	Psychology
Spring 2025	Hansun To	Mathematics
Spring 2025	Heather Treseler	English
Spring 2025	Joanne Gallagher Worthley	Occupational Therapy

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SPRING 2025 | MARK BEAUDRY  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

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*“History and Life of Prophet Muhammad:  
Justice, Security, and Intelligence”*

- Fulbright applicant to study in India
- Potential scholarly article
- Archival research review



# SPRING 2025 | MAURA COLLINS

## BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

### *“Diagnostics in the Biotechnology Industry”*

- Collaboration with Brigham and Women’s Hospital Microbiome facility
- Trinity College, Dublin research into the role of microbiomes in the Great Hunger
- Potential bridge program development in Medical Laboratory Certification

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SPRING 2025 | TOM CONROY  
URBAN STUDIES DEPARTMENT

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*“Creating the Klan: The Life and Times of the  
KKK in 1920’s Worcester”*

- Examination of the roots, impact, demise and legacy of the Klan in Worcester
- Urban America and the Klan
- Potential journal article

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SPRING 2025 | CARLOS FONTES  
COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

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*“Science and Ancestral Knowledge Video Dialogues”*

- Production of 10 video dialogues between scientists and indigenous peoples
- Scholarly paper of findings

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SPRING 2025 | ELIZABETH SILER  
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AND ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT

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*“Pregnancy Loss and Work”*

- Large scale interviews using qualitative techniques and 80-100 participants
- Primary and potential secondary scholarly articles



SPRING 2025 | ROBERT SMITH  
HISTORY/POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

*“The Ratification of the Constitution in  
Massachusetts”*

- Book preparation on the ratification of Massachusetts' Constitution
- Federalism and anti-federalism examined from archives and historical society visits throughout New England

# SPRING 2025 | CHAMPIKA SOYSA

## PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT

### *“Psychological Phenomena that Modulate Mental Distress and Wellbeing in College Students Across Phases of COVID-19”*

- Literature review and framework completed
- Qualitative and quantitative data analysis
- Potential conference presentations

# SPRING 2025 | HANSUN TO

## MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT

### *“Exploring Traffic Equations and Unveiling Pandemic Impact: Enhancing MA-105’s Approach in the Post-Pandemic Era”*

- Differential equations exploration
- Improvements in MA-105 regarding pandemic learning loss and mathematics
- Examination of the use of OER and potential for increased use

SPRING 2025 | HEATHER TRESELER  
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

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“Manuscript completion of *Likeness* and  
*Four Scars*”

- Editing of two contracted forthcoming books
- Completion of full length poems manuscript and a memoir
- Engagement with the visual arts



# SPRING 2025 | JOANNE GALLAGHER WORTHLEY

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY DEPARTMENT

## *“The Use of Anatomage to Improve Interprofessional Education”*

- Exploring opportunities to collaborate across health disciplines and utilizing a visual and kinesthetic learning tool
- Formalizing collaboration across the health disciplines at WSU and beyond

# Full Year 2024/2025

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Semester	Faculty Member	Department
Fall 2024 and Spring 2025	Sara Young	Education

# FALL 2024 – SPRING 2025 | SARA YOUNG

## EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

### *“Building World-mindedness with Global Children’s and Young Adult Literature”*

- Analysis of social justice themes in children’s and young adult’s literature and the research surrounding them
- Publication and potential peer reviewed journal articles

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# Questions?



# President's Update

November 2023



## President's Message

Research, scholarship, or, especially in the Visual and Performing Arts department, creative activity, are essential components of a faculty member's career. In fact, demonstrating these abilities is how they earn their terminal degree, which nearly all of our full-time, tenure-track faculty hold.

Once they land a tenure-track position, faculty must periodically exercise those research muscles. And so Worcester State, like nearly every other university, evaluates that aspect of a faculty member's professional life, and the Massachusetts state universities' collective bargaining agreement with the faculty union establishes processes for sabbaticals. They may be taken every seven years here at Worcester State and have produced numerous books, peer reviewed journal articles, laboratory explorations, field work, applied projects, conference presentations, poetry chapbooks, plays, and other works of art. Such endeavors also lead to recognition of our faculty's expertise by external organizations. You will read about some of those achievements and honors in this issue of the Update.

It is not lost on me that these faculty accomplishments also serve to improve Worcester State's reputation, which in turn helps us attract new faculty, as well as students. Sabbaticals also can re-ignite a professor's passion for their discipline and lead to insights and an updated body of knowledge that pays dividends in their classrooms for years to come. That, in turn, enhances our students' learning and helps us achieve one of our six overarching [Strategic Plan](#) goals: "Academic excellence and distinction."

I appreciate the Board's support for sabbaticals as an important aspect of university life, and hope you learn from – and even enjoy – a post-sabbatical presentation at the November meeting.



**WORCESTER  
STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

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### **PRESIDENT'S OFFICE**

Worcester State University  
486 Chandler Street  
Worcester, MA 01602  
508-929-8000  
[www.worcester.edu](http://www.worcester.edu)

## Embracing Diversity and Inclusion

### A Diverse Student Population

This fall, Worcester State welcomed its most diverse incoming student class ever, amid a significant rebound in first-year student enrollment.

**Some 44 percent** of the incoming class of 1,284 transfer and first-year students identifies as ALANA/BIPOC (African, Latine, Asian, Native American and/or Black, Indigenous, People of Color), **a 22 percent increase** from last year. The students originate from 23 states and six countries, with half of them being the first in their families to attend college. The University's efforts through the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the AID program, along with specific admissions process changes, are among the initiatives that are helping the University become more diverse.

### Diversity Initiatives in the Classroom

Worcester State University continues its commitment to diversity and inclusion as its student body becomes more diverse. The University is working to ensure the faculty and curriculum reflect that growing diversity.

- **Faculty Development:** Worcester State has implemented initiatives aimed at increasing faculty diversity, such as involving our [faculty fellows](#), Danielle Morales (Urban Studies) and [Nafisa Tanjeem](#) (Interdisciplinary Studies), in the [North Star Collective](#) to elevate faculty of color.
- **Expanding Course Offerings:** Supported by grants from the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, the University is focusing on expanding its curriculum in diversity content areas, developing new programs through the [Center for Teaching and Learning](#) (CTL).
- **WISE Program:** Worcester State sponsors up to four ALANA/BIPOC summer graduate student fellows through the [WISE Program](#) that is funded by a grant from the Department of Higher Education's Higher Education (DHE) Innovation Fund. This program provides a stipend, allowance, and faculty mentoring on diversity, equity and inclusion, with the goal of connecting participants with the University as potential future faculty members.
- **Author Ilyassah Shabazz:** The University has hired its first DEI Fellow, Ilyassah Shabazz, the daughter of Malcolm X, to aid with the university's DEI efforts in the History and Political Science department and beyond. Read more [here](#).

### Faculty Diversity

Worcester State is collaborating with Framingham State and Bridgewater State Universities on a grant project funded by the [National Science Foundation's Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate \(AGEP\) program](#). The goal is to create a national model for recruiting and advancing early career faculty from underrepresented groups in STEM fields.

The grant, led by Worcester State's Dean of the School of Science, Technology, and Health, Dr. Linda Larrivee, has supported the hiring of two new faculty members so far - Dr. Sarah Eagan in Psychology and Dr. Jaime Mancilla in Biology. They receive mentoring, research funding, and connections through AGEP-MUS. The university plans to hire two more Biology faculty and one Chemistry faculty member with grant funding.

In addition, AGEP-MUS shares professional development resources and events open to all faculty and staff each month. These aim to improve institutional commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and a supportive climate across the three universities. The grant impacts departments and units campus-wide.



### Embracing DEI via the CTL

The [Center for Teaching and Learning](#) (CTL) remains steadfast in advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) initiatives, with an eye toward bolstering student retention. Here are some key programs and initiatives that have been undertaken recently:

- **Promoting a Sense of Belonging:** In May, renowned sociologist [Dr. Lisa Nunn](#) led a workshop for over 70 participants on enhancing the sense of belonging for first-generation college students academically, socially, and within the broader college community. Participants received copies of her books, [College Belonging](#) and [33 Simple Strategies for Faculty](#), to further explore strategies for facilitating a sense of belonging amongst students.
- **Driving DEIJ Initiatives:** Dr. Mary Fowler, Faculty Fellow for DEIJ, continues to lead efforts to bolster best practices for engaging BIPOC/ALANA students. This summer, Dr. Fowler facilitated syllabus review workshops and gave a keynote address titled "Equity through Practice and Policy: Modeling at the Institutional, Departmental, and Course Levels" at the Academic Affairs Leadership Retreat. Additionally, the CTL has planned a DEIJ workshop series for faculty in 2023-24, covering topics such as empowering adult learners and supporting neurodiverse students through collaborative learning approaches.
- **Fostering Teaching Excellence:** [The Early Career Teaching Fellows program](#), designed for tenure-track faculty, focuses on enhancing teaching through innovative practices while also developing faculty leadership and unity within the university. Through a competitive application process, participants engage in a three-semester learning community that culminates in a teaching and learning project that is funded by the President's Office strategic planning initiative.

To date, seven fellows have independently and collaboratively created novel learning experiences across the curriculum to engage our students. One exemplary project, "Pathways to Belonging in Science: Including Diverse Scientists and Health Disparities in the Anatomy & Physiology Classroom" by Dr. Luis Rosado, showcases the impactful work being realized through this program.





### Addressing Food Insecurity

The Urban Action Institute and Office of Student Affairs received a \$75,000, 18-month grant from the [Department of Higher Education's Hunger Free Campus Initiative](#) to address food insecurity, which can affect equitable outcomes for students facing hunger. Led by Dr. Adam Saltsman and Vice President of Student Affairs Julie Kazarian, the project will assess implementing a grocery store and convenience corners that accept SNAP benefits to increase affordable, fresh food access on campus.

A diverse coalition of stakeholders was engaged in the project, including faculty, the Latino Education Institute, community partners, and five students using it for their theses/capstones. This coalition will be key to developing and implementing a long-term plan for a student-run grocery store that increases equitable access to food and supports the University's commitment to food security through comprehensive short- and long-term solutions.



## Supporting Academic Excellence

### Nursing's Reaccreditation

[Worcester State University](#) is pleased to report the [baccalaureate and graduate nursing degree programs have been reaccredited through 2033](#) by the [Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education](#) (CCNE), as recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. CCNE accreditation contributes to public health by identifying programs that demonstrate effective educational practices.

CCNE works with the [American Association of Colleges of Nursing](#) to provide rigorous standards and ongoing assessment for continuous improvement. Accreditation signals the university's commitment and ability to deliver premier nursing education. It benefits students seeking jobs and graduate programs that require degrees from accredited institutions.

This successful reaccreditation reflects the exceptional effort by nursing faculty, staff, and administration in preparing for the review process. The reaccreditation affirms the excellent quality of Worcester State's nursing programs.



### Fulbright Awards

Dr. Nabin Malakar, Professor of Earth, Environment, and Physics, received a [Fulbright Award](#) for Fall 2023 to travel to Nepal where he participated in several programs. He conducted a hands-on workshop focused on air quality sensing using ground and remote methods. The workshop aimed to provide participants with a fundamental understanding of sensors and empower them to apply toolkits and implement mini-projects to demonstrate their learning. Participants showcased knowledge through mini-projects and conveyed enthusiasm about applying these new skills in their science careers.

Dr. Malakar and colleagues also established [Purple Air monitoring stations](#) across Nepal connected to the internet so data is available worldwide. This serves as a keystone observation point for studying regional air quality. They plan to analyze data and develop models using the collected information. Their roadside data collection showed that fine particulate exposure exceeded human comfort levels over 90% of the time, with similar results inside Kathmandu Valley.

~\*~

Dr. Margaret Kerr, Professor of Chemistry, received a Fulbright Senior Specialist Grant to travel to Thailand where she will present "Green Chemistry and the UN Sustainable Development Goals" workshops. The workshops, adapted for high school through graduate students, integrate systems thinking to examine the interconnected nature of green chemistry and the [UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals](#), using case studies on solar panels and product life cycles.

Dr. Kerr will also share her antimicrobial research, which uses microwave synthesis to develop antibacterial flavones and imines in a more sustainable "solvent-free" system. She has created a library of zinc complexes to evaluate against bacteria including *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Escherichia coli*, demonstrating their promise as antibacterial agents.

### First-Year Writing Fellows

The College Writing I Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) program launched in Fall 2023 to provide academic support modeled after the University's successful [STEM PAL](#) programs. With external grant funding, the English Department and Academic Success Center developed this new initiative for the first-year writing course, supplementing the services offered by the University's Writing Center.

Expanding peer learning opportunities aims to deliver consistent, equitable assistance across College Writing I sections. This funding supports a proof of concept for the program, which will be used to assess its long-term efficacy and sustainability. Goals of the program include improving grades, retention, and graduation rates by embedding support tied to faculty and students. Additionally, PAL can help students develop strategies to apply in other courses. Because first-year writing performance is a primary predictor of future academic success, this program will ensure that all students have access to robust academic support.

## Fostering Innovation and Stewardship

Worcester State University faculty members have recently been awarded several external grants supporting research initiatives, student support, and community engagement. These grants highlight the expertise of WSU faculty and the value funders see in the University's work. This external funding enables critical projects aligned with WSU's mission and values. The faculty's continued grants success exemplifies the University's commitment to excellence in teaching, research, and service.

### Career and Technical Student Support

***\$60,000 from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education***

This grant to the Department of Health Sciences will support work with [HOSA-Future Health Professionals](#), which works with more than 300 career and technical high school students across the state to help them prepare for success after high school.

Project Director-Jaime Vallejos, M.D.

### Hunger-Free Campus Initiative

***\$75,000 from the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education***

This grant to the Urban Action Institute in the Department of Urban Studies will support an 18-month effort to strategically address food insecurity at Worcester State using a multi-pronged approach to provide for students' immediate need for affordable fresh food while also developing long-term solutions for equitable access to healthier and more affordable food for all students.

Project Director-Adam Saltsman, Ph.D.

### Star Formation Research

***\$256,600 from the Universities Space Research Association***

This federal grant to Dr. Ian Stephens in the Department of Earth, Environment, and Physics continues support for his ongoing research on star formation with the SOFIA telescope, the only telescope in the world that can make observations in the far infrared.

Principal Investigator: Ian Stephens, Ph.D.

### Promote Children's Learning About Biological Variability

***\$146,883 from the National Science Foundation.***

Leveraging Simple Card Games to Promote Children's Learning About Biological Variability. This grant will involve designing and testing simple card games to teach young children about biological variability. Research will be conducted in university labs and in children's science museums (including the EcoTarium in Worcester). The research will impact preschool children and their parents. The project will produce new knowledge about how games can promote children's science learning.

Principal Investigator: Benjamin Jee, Ph.D.







655 K STREET NW  
SUITE 750  
WASHINGTON DC 20001

202-887-6791

CCNEACCREDITATION.ORG

November 2, 2023

Catherine S. Thomas, DNP, MSN, RN, CNE  
Associate Dean  
Department of Nursing  
Worcester State University  
486 Chandler Street  
Worcester, MA 01602

Dear Dr. Thomas:

On behalf of the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), I am pleased to advise you that the CCNE Board of Commissioners acted at its meeting on October 3-6, 2023, to grant accreditation to the **baccalaureate degree program in nursing** at Worcester State University for 10 years, extending to December 31, 2033. The accreditation action is effective as of February 22, 2023, which is the first day of the program's recent CCNE on-site evaluation. You should plan for the next on-site evaluation to take place in the spring of 2033.

The program was considered by the Board using the *CCNE Standards for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs* (2018).

At its meeting, the Board determined that the program met all four accreditation standards. The Board additionally determined that there are no compliance concerns with respect to the key elements.

As is required for all accredited programs, a continuous improvement progress report (CIPR) must be submitted at the midpoint of the accreditation term. Please note that the CIPR needs to demonstrate the program's compliance with the CCNE standards and key elements that are in effect at the time of its submission. As a courtesy, CCNE will send a reminder letter to the chief nurse administrator informing the program of the specific standards to be addressed and providing guidance for the preparation of the report. The deadline for submitting the CIPR to CCNE is December 1, 2028. The Report Review Committee, and then the Board of Commissioners, will review the CIPR. For more information about CIPRs and the report review process, please refer to the CCNE procedures.

As you know, the team report and the program's response to the team report are available to the institution in the CCNE Online Community. We hope that the results of the self-study process and the team report will be useful to the continued growth and development of the nursing program. The certificate of accreditation will be mailed to you in the coming weeks.

In accordance with CCNE policy, if a program or institution elects to make a public disclosure of a program's accreditation status with CCNE, the program or institution must disclose that status accurately. The program or institution disclosing the information must identify the nursing program and its affiliation with CCNE. Please refer to CCNE's disclosure policy and the statements CCNE has approved for use, as well as information on use of the CCNE accreditation seal, at <http://www.aacnnursing.org/CCNE/Seal-Policy/Baccalaureate-Graduate>. Please ensure that the institution's website and other materials are updated to reflect this language, as appropriate.

As a reminder, programs are expected to comply with the CCNE standards and procedures throughout the period of accreditation. These documents are available at

<https://www.aacnnursing.org/CCNE-Accreditation/Accreditation-Resources/Standards-Procedures-Guidelines>. Information on advising CCNE in the event of a substantive change affecting the nursing program is available at <https://www.aacnnursing.org/CCNE-Accreditation/What-We-Do/Bacc-Graduate-Change-Notifications>. Substantive change notifications must be received by CCNE no earlier than 90 days prior to implementation or occurrence of the change, but no later than 90 days after implementation or occurrence of the change. These reporting requirements are described further in the CCNE procedures.

Thank you for your participation in the CCNE accreditation process. The Commissioners join me in expressing our very best wishes as you continue to promote excellence in nursing education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Philip R. Martinez, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Philip R. Martinez, Jr., EdD, MSN, APRN-BC, CCRN-CMC  
Chair, CCNE Board of Commissioners

cc: President Barry M. Maloney  
CCNE Board of Commissioners  
CCNE Accreditation Review Committee  
CCNE Evaluation Team





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Chair, CCNE Board of Commissioners

cc: President Barry M. Maloney  
CCNE Board of Commissioners  
CCNE Accreditation Review Committee  
CCNE Evaluation Team

