WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Thursday, November 19, 2026
4:00 P.M.
Wellness Center, Room 204

Meeting Called By: Dr. Lisa Colombo (Chair) **Minutes**: Nikki Kapurch

Board Members: Dr. Lisa Colombo (Chair); Maria Caires; Monica Aryitey, Esq; Kelly Brissette; Darnell Dunn (Vice Chair); Mary Foley; Maureen Power; Kristen Garvey; Amy Peterson; Jake Sanders; Dr. Lawrence Sasso (Vice Chair)

WSU Staff: Barry Maloney; Ashlynn Allain; Kathy Eichelroth; Ryan Forsythe; Carl Herrin; Nikki Kapurch; Josh Katz; Tom McNamara; Edgar Moros; Lois Wims

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

AGENDA

ITEM	RESPONSIBLE	ACTION
1. *Administrative Business* A. Call to Order B. Approval of the Minutes: 1. Planning & Development Committee - October 22, 2026* 2. Finance & Facilities Committee - October 22, 2026* 3. Full Board Meeting- October 22, 2026*	Dr. Lisa Colombo	**1. vote required** **2. vote required** **3. vote required**
2. *Inclusive Excellence and Belonging Presentation - 15 minutes w/ Q&A* A. Title II Presentation*	Edgar Moros Deborah O'Neil & Amber Vail	A. Informational
3. *Sabbatical Presentation -15 minutes w/ Q&A* A. Title: Measuring Racial Disparities, The Importance of the Benchmark. by Mary Fowler, Ph.D., Professor, Mathematics*	Lois Wims Mary Fowler, Ph.D.	A. Informational
5. *Academic & Student Development Committee Report* A. November 19 Academic & Student Development Committee Meeting Packet* B. Approval of AY 2027-2028 Sabbatical Leave Proposals	Maureen Power	A. Informational **B. vote required**
6. *Administrative Updates* A. Report of the Chair a. Next meeting: January 7, 2027 B. Report of the Student Trustee C. Report of the President a. President's Update* b. Approval of Honorary Degree* c. Classroom Technology Update d. Campaign Update e. Success Funds Update*	Dr. Lisa Colombo Maria Caires Barry Maloney	a. Informational **b. vote required** c. Informational d. Informational e. Informational
7. *Adjournment*	Dr. Lisa Colombo	**7. vote required**

* Attachments

WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Planning and Development Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes

CHAIR:	Darnell Dunn (Chair)	DATE:	October 22, 2026
LOCATION:	Wellness Center, Room 204	MINUTES BY:	Nikki Kapurch
TIME:	2:00 PM		
COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:	Darnell Dunn (Chair), Jacob Sanders (Vice Chair), Kelly Brissette, Mary Foley, Dr. Lawrence Sasso		
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:	Dr. Lisa Colombo		
WSU STAFF:	Ashlynn Allain; Kathy Eichelroth; Carl Herrin; Kathy Eichelroth; Barry Maloney; Josh Katz		

The provisions of General Laws, Chapter 30A, having been complied with and a quorum present, a meeting of the Planning and Development Committee was held on Thursday, October 22, 2026, in room 204 of the Wellness Center. Chair Dunn called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Administrative Business

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - June 4, 2026

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

VOTED: **to approve the June 4, 2026, minutes of the Planning and Development Committee meeting as presented.**

Planning and Development Committee Report: Kathy Eichelroth

Worcester State University Campus Master Plan Presentation Overview

- Trustee Dunn welcomed VP Eichelroth. VP Eichelroth introduced Jesilka Cortez, Strategic Portfolio Officer for Administration and Finance, as the planning liaison for the master plan process, which kicked off in October 2025. Sandra Olson's retirement led Jesilka and Peter Fernuccio to assume additional coordination responsibilities.
- Cortez introduced our partners from the Massachusetts Department of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAM) and our planning consultant, Jones Architectures, who walked the trustees through the Master Plan PowerPoint included in the meeting packet.
- Key contributors were members of the Campus Advisory Group, which included faculty, staff, and students.
- Student engagement included over 1,000 students who weighed in on the plan. Student feedback reflected a desire to balance preserving campus identity with meaningful improvements, particularly for the Student Center and the Library Learning Commons.
- The team identified and refined seven overarching goals throughout the project to guide all planning recommendations. These included creating a modern student hub, establishing a learning commons, enhancing experiential learning, greening the campus, improving accessible movement, optimizing existing space, and strengthening community connection.

- Buildings flagged for potential removal or renovation include the Student Center, LRC, Chandler Village, May Street Building, and the facilities modular; the Student Center was recommended for major renovation rather than demolition due to its central role.
- Creating a new Library Learning Commons was identified as the primary intervention to achieve the goal of a modern learning commons, and it would also serve as the new home for the Department of Visual and Performing Arts on campus.
- May Street was proposed for redevelopment as a community hub to strengthen the university's connection to the surrounding neighborhood.
- A question was raised about whether the classroom reduction methodology was based on current or future enrollment; the response confirmed it was based on current enrollment, with industry best practices applied, and flexibility was built in to accommodate potential growth without overbuilding.
- A trustee questioned the net parking impact and accessibility for students parking at the upper campus garage. It was confirmed that there would be a short-term net loss during construction but an overall net gain once both garages were complete, with the Green Heart providing accessible pedestrian routes to lower campus.
- A 10-year implementation timeline was developed, to sequence all proposed projects and to distribute costs more evenly, rather than concentrating major investment at the outset.
- Three phasing options were presented, each beginning with a different high-impact, high-cost project, in order to provide flexibility depending on available funding.
- The three options were designed to give Worcester State the financial flexibility to respond to funding opportunities as they become available over the 10-year horizon.
- The final Master Plan report will be presented to students in the near future.
- A detailed programming study of office space across campus was recommended as a follow-up effort outside the Master Plan's current scope.
- A traffic and parking study was recommended to determine the precise capacity requirements for the two proposed parking garages, before those plans are finalized.

The board moved to recommend to the full board acceptance of the Worcester State University campus Master Plan, Mass State Project WOR2501.

Upon a motion made by Trustee Sanders and seconded by Trustee Brissette, it was unanimously

VOTED: **to recommend to the full Board the acceptance of the Worcester State University Campus Master Plan, Mass State Project No. WOR2501.**

With there being no further business, the WSU Board of Trustees Planning and Development Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

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

VOTED: **to adjourn the meeting at 2:55 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Barry M. Maloney
Secretary, Board of Trustees

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

CHAIR:	Dr. Lawrence Sasso (Chair)	DATE:	October 22, 2026
LOCATION:	Wellness Center, Room 204	MINUTES BY:	Nikki Kapurch
TIME:	3:00 PM		
COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:	Dr. Lawrence Sasso (Chair), Mary Foley (Vice Chair), Monica Aryitey, Esq., Darnell Dunn, Amy Peterson, Jacob Sanders		
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:	Dr. Lisa Colombo		
WSU STAFF:	Ashlynn Allain; Kathy Eichelroth; Carl Herrin; Josh Katz; Barry Maloney		

The provisions of General Laws, Chapter 30A, having been complied with and a quorum present, a meeting of the Finance and Facilities Committee was held on Thursday, October 22, 2026, in room 204 of the Wellness Center. Chair Sasso called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Administrative Business

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - June 4, 2026

Upon a motion made by Trustee Dunn and seconded by Trustee Foley, it was unanimously

VOTED: **to approve the June 4, 2026, minutes of the Finance and Facilities Committee meeting as presented.**

FINANCE & FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

FY 2026 DRAFT FINANCIAL STATEMENT AUDIT REPORT

- Trustee Sasso called upon VP Kathy Eichelroth, who introduced Jim Johnston and Laura Pizzimenti from Bollus Lynch, LLP, to summarize the report.
- Mr. Johnston walked the trustees through the report.
- The audit relates to the financial statements as of and for the years ended June 30, 2026, and June 30, 2025.
- Two new GASB accounting standards were adopted this year, both related to presentation; minimal impact on the University given its agency component unit status.
- Bollus Lynch, LLP, also audits the Worcester State Foundation's financial statements, and the report is included with this WSU audit.
- The University presents net position statements, revenues, expenses, changes in net position, and cash flows.
- The University is obligated to contribute to the Commonwealth's OPEB Plan, which provides health care and life insurance benefits.
- 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 audit revealed no instances of noncompliance affecting the University's financial statements.

- The financial statements and related footnotes are presented separately from the Management Discussion and Analysis.
- Jim Johnston to share the residence hall occupancy rate data (referenced as 88.1%) with the committee.
- Trustee Aryitey noted a recording error on page 5 of the report under Unrestricted net position. The amount should be $11,913,572, not $8,411,801. VP Eichelroth stated that it was her responsibility and that she would update the report to reflect the adjustment.
- The report shows a large operating loss of $53 million because accounting rules prohibit including state appropriations in operating income.
- Key risks identified include reduced state appropriations, potential federal funding cuts affecting state budgets, and declining residence hall occupancy.
- The audit opinion was clean, unmodified, with no issues identified.
- The updated pension, OPEB, and workers' compensation figures from the Commonwealth are to be incorporated into the final version of the financial statements.
- Chair Sasso reported that the auditors discussed the report in detail with President Maloney and VP Eichelroth and thanked the team for their hard work.

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

VOTED: **to recommend to the full Board the approval of Worcester State University's Financial Statements and Management's Discussion and Analysis with Supplemental Information, Statistical Information, and Other Reports for the Years ended June 30, 2026 and 2025, and Independent Auditor's Report, as presented by Bollus Lynch.**

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

Upon a motion made by Trustee Foley and seconded by Trustee Dunn, it was unanimously

VOTED: **to adjourn the meeting at 3:43 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Barry M. Maloney
Secretary, Board of Trustees

WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Meeting Minutes

CHAIR:	Dr. Lisa Colombo (Chair)	DATE: October 22, 2026
LOCATION:	Wellness Center, Room 204	MINUTES BY: Nikki Kapurch
TIME:	4:00 p.m.	
BOARD MEMBERS:	Monica Aryitey, Esq.; Kelly Brissette; Dr. Lisa Colombo (Chair); Darnell Dunn (Vice Chair); Mary Foley; Kristen Garvey; Amy Peterson; Maureen Power Dr. Lawrence Sasso (Vice Chair); Jake Sanders	
WSU STAFF:	Barry Maloney; Ashlynn Allain; Kathy Eichelroth; Ryan Forsythe; Carl Herrin; Nikki Kapurch; Josh Katz; Julie Kazarian; Tom McNamara; Sathi Mitra; Edgar Moros; Lois Wims	

The provisions of General Laws, Chapter 30A, having been complied with and a quorum present, a meeting of the Board of Trustees was held on Thursday, October 22, 2026, in room 204, located in the Wellness Center. Chair Colombo called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Chair Colombo told the board members that the student trustee elected to serve on the board for the 2026-2027 academic year had withdrawn from the position. A new election was held on October 21, and a new student trustee was elected, Maria Caires. Chair Colombo introduced Maria Caires. Maria Caires is a Biotechnology major at Worcester State University, with a minor in Psychobiology and a concentration in Pre-Medicine, and is expected to graduate with the class of 2027.

Driven by her passion for leadership and student advocacy, she has served in several Student Government Association roles, including Commuter Senator, Vice President, and Senate Chair. She is also an undergraduate psychology researcher studying perfectionism, cultural identity, and mental health. The board invited her to present updates ahead of her official membership.

Caires provided a student body report. Thea's Pantry reported 647 visits in September — up 100 from the prior year. Student concerns raised with President Maloney included construction safety and entrance blockage, Title IX policy stance, Wi-Fi and tech improvements, and student worker paycheck delays being reviewed by HR.

Administrative Business:

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - Human Resources Committee Meeting - June 11, 2026

Upon a motion made by Trustee Dunn and seconded by Trustee Garvey, it was unanimously

VOTED: **to approve the June 11, 2026, minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting as presented.**

WSU Board of Trustees
October 22, 2026

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - Full Board Meeting - June 11, 2026
Upon a motion made by Trustee Foley and seconded by Trustee Aryitey, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the June 11, 2026, minutes of the Full Board meeting as presented.

Inclusive Excellence and Belonging Presentation
Title IX Presentation

- Chair Colombo welcomed Dr. Edgar Moros, Executive Director of Inclusive Excellence and Belonging, who introduced Dinah Moore, Director, Title IX Coordinator.
- Dinah delivered a comprehensive training presentation to the board, noting that trustees are classified as required reporters under Title IX.
- Conduct must be severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive to meet the federal Title IX threshold, while the University's Equal Opportunity Policy provides broader coverage for sex-based discrimination.
- The formal federal definition of Title IX prohibits exclusion from or denial of benefits in any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance on the basis of sex.
- Worcester State's policies extend beyond federal requirements to include Massachusetts state policies, the state university equal opportunity non-discrimination plan, the Violence Against Women Act, the Clery Act, Title VII, and NCAA sexual misconduct requirements.
- Online prevention programs are assigned to all first-year students covering sexual violence, alcohol, and hazing, though completion rates have declined in recent years and efforts are underway to increase participation.
- The group discussed making the online training mandatory as a potential solution, noting that it was previously required and recommending that it be reinstated.
- A summary of the presentation was also provided.

Lt. Col. James F. Sheehan '55 Commonwealth Honors Program Presentation

- Chair Colombo introduced Nicole Rosa, Ph.D., Honors Director, Professor of Psychology. Dr. Rosa mentioned that she works with Martin Fromm, Ph.D., Honors Faculty Fellow, Professor of History.
- The Commonwealth Honors Program was established in 1996 and named in honor of Colonel James F. Sheehan, Class of 1955, in 2018, and is celebrating its 30th anniversary with a record 386 enrolled students. It completed its seven-year statewide reaccreditation: reviewers praised program flexibility, administration support, and the Sheehan endowment — the only named, endowed honors program in the Massachusetts state university system. The Sheehan endowment was identified as a significant competitive advantage, enabling the program to fund student travel, study abroad, research, and co-curricular enrichment at levels unavailable to peer institutions.
- Students are admitted through the admissions process at the time of acceptance, with a general GPA threshold of 3.5 or higher, evidence of extracurricular involvement, and optional test scores of 1080 SAT or 26 ACT, with approximately the top 20 percent of admitted students offered a spot.
- Admission to the program is an opt-in offer rather than automatic enrollment, and internal transfer students may apply if they have a GPA of 3.5 or higher and have completed 45 credits or fewer.
- A summary of the presentation was also provided.

Planning and Development Committee Report

- Trustee Dunn, chair of the Planning and Development Committee, reported that the group convened

today at 2:00 pm. The campus Master Plan was developed over about one year with input from over a thousand students, faculty, and staff, and the committee is presenting it to the full board. The plan optimizes both indoor and outdoor space, with outdoor improvements focused on connectivity and cohesion between commuter and residential areas, and indoor improvements focused on reconfiguring Sullivan Hall classrooms and renovating the Student Center and Learning Resource Center into a Library Learning Commons.

- The Committee approved the Worcester State University Campus Master Plan (WOR2501), a 10-year plan featuring nine new buildings, two parking facilities expanding capacity by 33%, a new health building, and reconfigured indoor/outdoor spaces; implementation depends upon state funding scenarios and passage of the BRIGHT Act.

Upon a motion made by Trustee Dunn and seconded by Trustee Foley, it was unanimously

VOTED: **to accept the recommendation of the Planning and Development Committee and approve the Worcester State University Campus Master Plan, Mass State Project No. WOR2501.**

Finance & Facilities Committee Report

Trustee Sasso, chair of the Finance and Facilities Committee, reported that the group convened today at 3:00 p.m. to receive the DRAFT FY 2026 Independent Audit Report and Financial Statements. The committee thoroughly vetted the audit report, and the auditors from Bollus Lynch, LLP, reported that they did not identify any deficiencies in internal controls that they considered material weaknesses. It was a clean audit. VP Eichelroth and her team were thanked for their hard work and due diligence. Clean unmodified opinion. No unusual matters. The Committee approved the financial statements and audit report.

Upon a motion made by Trustee Sanders and seconded by Trustee Aryitey, it was unanimously

VOTED: **to accept the recommendation of the Finance and Facilities Committee and approve the Worcester State University's Financial Statements and Management's Discussion and Analysis with Supplemental Information, Statistical Information, and Other Reports for the Years ended June 30, 2026, and 2025, and Independent Auditor's Report, as presented by Bollus Lynch.**

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

- A board retreat is being planned for January 7, 2027, with a block of time reserved between 11:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. A survey has been sent to trustees to gather input on topics and priorities. President Maloney and I have discussed board education, and we are speaking with a third-party consultant about planning the retreat. Nikki sent the survey by email today.
- Trustees were asked to check their email several times per month to stay informed of communications sent between meetings.
- Committee assignment descriptions are included in the packet for your information. The following trustees have been assigned to their respective committees:

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WSU Board of Trustees
October 22, 2026

Monica Aryitey, Esq. (Chair)
Maureen Power (Vice Chair)
Amy Peterson
Kristen Garvey

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Darnell Dunn (Chair)
Jacob Sanders (Vice Chair)
Kelly Brissette
Mary Foley
Dr. Lawrence Sasso

FINANCE AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE
Dr. Lawrence Sasso (Chair)
Mary Foley (Vice Chair)
Monica Aryitey, Esq.
Darnell Dunn
Amy Peterson
Jacob Sanders

ACADEMIC AND STUDENT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Maureen Power (Chair)
Kelly Brissette (Vice Chair)
Kristen Garvey
Maria Caires

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Dr. Lisa Colombo, Chair
Darnell Dunn, Vice Chair
Dr. Lawrence Sasso, Vice Chair
President Maloney
Maureen Power
Monica Aryitey, Esq. (alternate)

The next meeting is scheduled for November 19, 2026.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

- The President's Update was included in the packet.
- President Maloney and Mary Jo Marion, Assistant Vice President, Latino Education Institute, were named to the search committee for the new Commissioner of Higher Education following Commissioner Ortega's resignation effective at the end of September.
- A Title II compliance briefing is planned for the next board meeting, covering federally driven accessibility requirements for online and other materials, with the University having received a one-year federal extension on compliance.
- Collective bargaining is set to begin in early 2027 as current three-year labor agreements across all three unions approach their expiration at the end of the current academic and fiscal year.
- A previously scheduled conference on campus in early October did not take place after engagement with the organization to address institutional concerns.

  - Carl Herrin will lead an after-action review examining how conferences and events are handled at intake, scheduled, communicated, and managed.
- A delegation from northwest Ireland is scheduled to visit Worcester on November 10th as part of a broader Massachusetts Chamber visit, with potential discussions about establishing a sister city relationship between Derry and Worcester.

Vice President Tom McNamara provided a Campaign Update.

- Believe in Beyond campaign, a $30M, three-year comprehensive fundraising effort, launched publicly with a $1M lead gift from David and Mary Cotter-Lemoine, a 1996 alumna.
- The campaign sits at just under $7M raised (23% of goal), with approximately $7.5M in gifts targeted for closure by early 2027.

Vice President Ryan Forsythe from Enrollment Management presented an enrollment update.

- Fall 2026 enrollment is up approximately 3.3%, driven by a 30% increase in transfer students — including 60 from Anna Maria College — while first-time student enrollment dipped 1% due to demographic decline, decreased college-going rates, and intensifying market competition.
- Direct admission pilots launched with Everett, Leicester, and Blackstone-Millville high schools, offering admission and merit scholarships to students with a 2.7+ GPA before they apply.

Vice President Lois Wims provided a brief update on the 2027 Strategic Plan and the status of the strategic planning process.

- We will build on the strengths of the previous plan, including broad constituent consultation, transparency, and its existing values and pillars. The plan will come to the Board for final approval.

Chief of Staff Carl Herrin provided a Chandler Street road project update.

- Chandler Street Road and water main reconstruction is a 30+ month project spanning three summers through fall 2029 and will involve two roundabouts, raised medians, bike lanes, and a net loss of 20 on-street parking spots. The University is coordinating with the City of Worcester to concentrate work between mid-May and the end of August each year to minimize campus disruption.

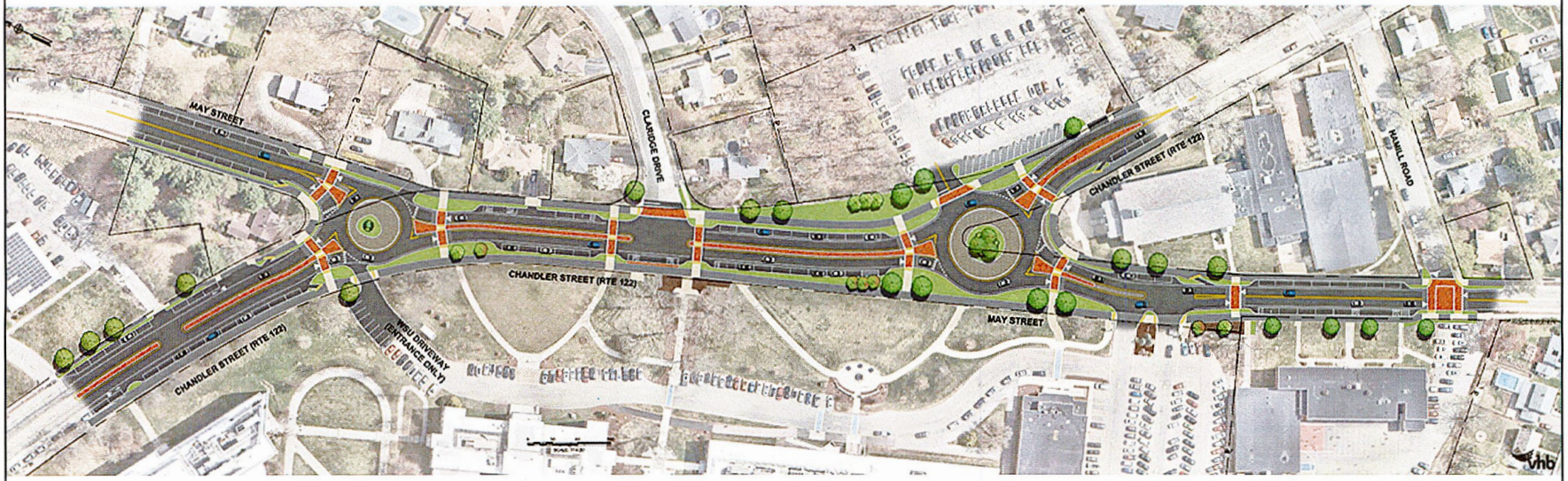
With there being no further business, the WSU Board of Trustees meeting was adjourned.

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

VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at 6:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barry M. Maloney
Secretary, Board of Trustees



https://www.worcesterma.gov/mobility/projects-engineering/chandler-street-may-street-improvements

WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY

Chandler Street Construction Projects

WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY

Title II Digital Compliance

Interim report from Digital Equity Working Group

Deborah Alvarez O'Neil, AVP for Communications and Marketing (Co-chair)
Amber Vaill, associate dean for Online, Graduate and Continuing Education (Co-chair)

November 2026

Digital Equity Working Group

The Digital Equity Working Group

- Work began September 2026
- Cross-functional group tasked with assessing where the university stands regarding Title II compliance, identifying needed resources and processes, and making recommendations to Executive Cabinet.
- Support ongoing work of **CTL, Academic Affairs, IT and MARCOM** and align efforts to close gaps and offer solutions



Digital Equity Working Group Members

- Deborah Alvarez O'Neil, assistant VP of communications and marketing (Co-chair)
- Amber Vaill, associate dean for online, graduate and continuing education (Co-chair)
- Matt Bejune, executive director of the Library
- Kiran Chamankar, project manager in Operational Excellence
- Simon Goodacre, associate director in Marketing
- Rachel Graddy, assistant dean of Student Accessibility Services
- Julie Habjan Boisselle, faculty development specialist, CTL: Faculty Development Center
- Dave Needham, assistant director for multimedia services in Information Technology
- Anupam Singh, associate vice president of Information Technology and CIO
- Jonathan Walker, director of Operational Excellence

Overview of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

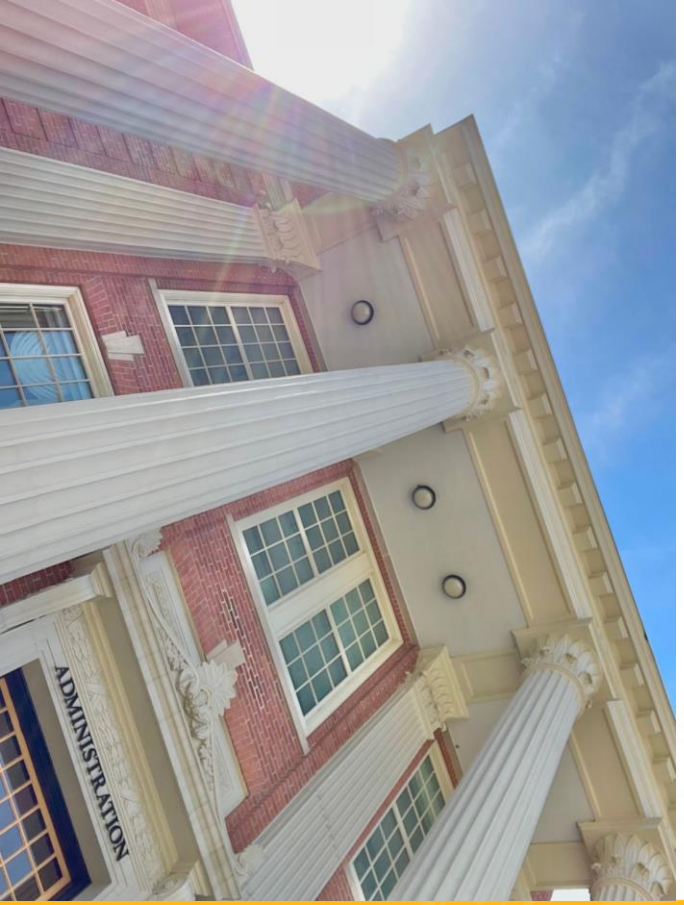
Title II requires that people with disabilities have a substantially equivalent ability to access the same information, engage in the same interactions, conduct the same transactions, and benefit from the same services, programs, and activities as individuals without disabilities.

- WCAG 2.1 Level AA Standards provide technical success criteria on areas such as:
  - use of alternative text
  - video captioning
  - color contrast
  - document structure, such as headings and table structure, for screen reader use
  - keyboard-based navigation

What materials are impacted?

- Web pages
- Social media posts
- Digital newsletters
- Course content shared online
- Digital signage
- Digitally distributed flyers
- Digital documents (Word docs, PDFs, Powerpoint files, etc.)
- Videos
- and more…





Our Digital Equity Framework

- Reframing compliance as equity, not just following a mandate
- Title II compliance ensures digital content is accessible to our entire community
- Digital equity is about providing a positive experience, supporting members of our community and the general public

“Compliance is a non-negotiable federal mandate. Equity is Worcester State’s longstanding commitment to all students and members of our community.”

-President Maloney, Sept 1 campus email

Why Accessibility Matters

- Inaccessible content prevents disabled people from accessing information
- Proactive efforts to ensure content is accessible helps everyone have access
- Access means some individuals no longer need to request special accommodations



Worcester State Digital Audit

Asset	Manager / Responsible Party	Compliance Assessment
University website worcester.edu	Office of Communications and Marketing	**98% compliant on track for full compliance**
68 University subdomains	Various units across the university	**Some unknown Major sites in progress**
102 Library services websites	Third-party vendors, ie. JSTOR, Lexis/Nexis *if we link to it, needs to be accessible*	**In progress; content is still being addressed by vendors**
16 third party sites linked to Worcester.edu	Platforms not owned by university, content managed by various depts. (Ie. Perceptive Content, KnowBe4, Lancer Edge)	**Unknown**
University Facebook, Insta, YouTube, TikTok, LI	Office of Communications and Marketing	**Fully Compliant**

Worcester State Digital Audit

Asset	Manager / Responsible Party	Compliance Assessment
154 university-affiliated social media accounts	Various academic, student support, administrative units, athletics teams, student clubs	**Low compliance**
Official campus announcements	Office of Communications and Marketing	**Fully Compliant**
Facstaff Email listserv **Student bulletin listserv**	Managed by IT but content is submitted by faculty/staff	**Platform is compliant** **Content varies**
Academic Catalog https://catalog.worcester.edu/	Enrollment Management	**93% Compliant**
12+ university newsletters	Various units: LEI, Advancement, HR, Career Center, LGBTQIA Ctr, OSILD	**Mixed to Low compliance**

Blackboard Learning Management System

- University’s supported platform for course materials
- Platform is Title II compliant; content varies
- Fall 2026 course content compliance: 68%
- Biggest issues: Document contrast, scanned PDFs that are not screen reader compatible, lack of image descriptions

Support and Tools

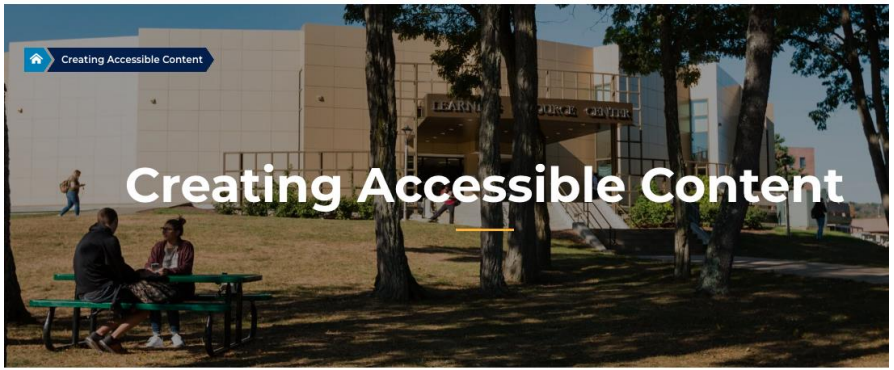
- Blackboard Ally: Tool in place to help faculty build compliant course work
- CTL and IT hosting trainings and 1-1 consultation with faculty
- Library working with faculty to update course materials



What we are doing

- **Creating awareness** and providing information
- **Building guidance** + providing immediate action steps and long-term institutional solutions
- **Outreach** to various units that manage digital content
- **1-1 Training** led by IT, CTL and MARCOM
- **Spring workshop series**: how-to workshops on social media, newsletters, document creation
- **Video library**: Creating live recorded how-to videos on topics like “how to do video captions”

New Title II Digital Resource Webpage



Resource guide for Campus ADA Title II digital compliance

Worcester State University is committed to ensuring all students, faculty, staff, alumni, and visitors have an equitable and accessible environment to learn, work and socialize. When our learning platforms, websites, social media, digital newsletters, emails and mobile apps are not accessible, they create barriers for people with disabilities, and exclude them from engaging with online content, learning, and services.

bitly

worcester.edu/digital-accessibility/

Next steps

November

- Announce new webpage, follow up with affiliate site managers
- Continue outreach to various units with guidance on immediate action steps (newsletters, social media, third party hosted sites)
- Continue removing all PDFs from worcester.edu public and intranet
- Identify what documents should be remediated on ongoing basis for digital posting
- Investigating vendors/costs for manual remediation, digital archive to store documents
- Build a cost estimate for ongoing compliance efforts

December: Working Group will deliver completed report with recommendations to Executive Cabinet



Questions?

November 19, 2026

Digital Equity Working Group

SPRING 2026 SABBATICAL

Measuring Racial Disparities

The Importance of the Benchmark

From Traffic Stops to Jury Selection

Mary Fowler, Ph.D.
Department of Mathematics
Worcester State University
November 19, 2026

Three steps. One statistical question.

1 WHAT HAPPENED?

Measure the racial distribution of the observed action.

2 WHAT WOULD WE EXPECT?

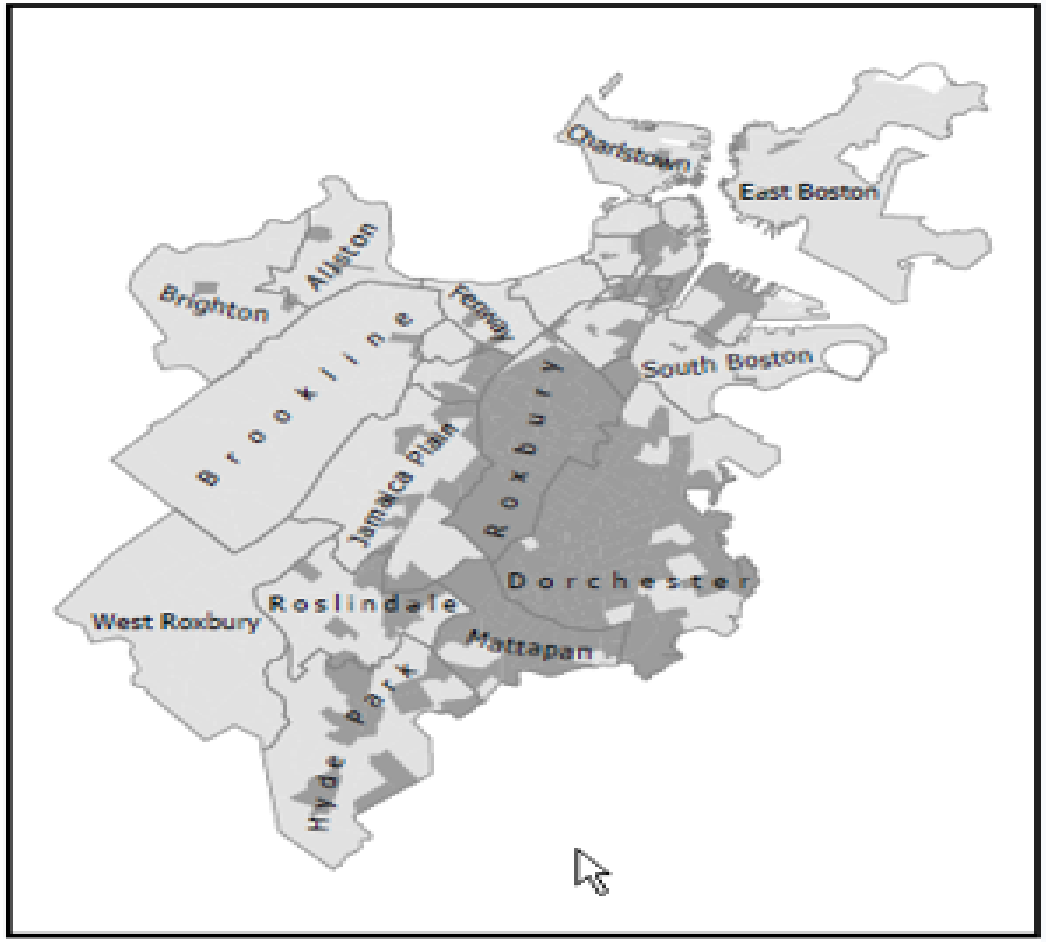
Construct the benchmark for a race-neutral process.

3 HOW DO THEY COMPARE?

Compare the observed and benchmark distributions.

The difficult part is often not the comparison. It is deciding what belongs in the benchmark.

Long: Finding the right neighborhood



Block groups containing stops

First attempt

Police-district residential population: too broad.

Refined approach

With a Worcester State GIS colleague, geolocate traffic stops and identify the Census geography containing them.

The benchmark

Residential racial composition of the relevant stop area, with attention to surrounding neighborhoods.

State Police: When residents are not the drivers

The problem highlighted by Commonwealth v. Lora

A highway crosses communities, but nearby residents do not necessarily represent the motorists using it.

Focal trooper

Racial distribution of the trooper's citations.

Internal benchmark

Other MSP troopers matched by issuing agency, location, and shift.

A few cases using this approach are currently open.

VanDerwerken, D. N., Fowler, M. S., & Kadane, J. B. (2023). "Reference populations for examining possible racial profiling." Law, Probability and Risk.

The comparison: An illustrative trooper

Example: Hispanic share of citations



Difference: 20 percentage points

Hypothetical percentages — not results from an actual case.

A new setting, the same three steps

Observed distribution

The racial distribution of people appearing in jury venires.

Race-neutral benchmark

The racial distribution of the estimated jury-eligible population.

Compare the two distributions.

Research collaboration with statistician Joseph B. Kadane, Carnegie Mellon University

Jury selection: Finding the population

The assumption

The legal team believed racial data on citizens were unavailable from the Census.

The discovery

Citizenship estimates were available and could inform the benchmark.



Residents → **Citizens of relevant ages** → **Estimated eligible population**

Always a critical step: Checking assumptions about data.

Hennepin County: What the analysis showed

Consistent and substantial underrepresentation of Black individuals in the jury venires analyzed.

Analysis included:

- Census-based estimates of the jury-eligible population
- Comparison with observed venire composition
- Statistical assessment of disparities
- Discussion of jury source-list construction

Report submitted April 12, 2026 • Litigation ongoing

TAKEAWAY

The question stays the same. The benchmark changes.

LONG	Where were the officers actually stopping people?
STATE POLICE	What do comparable troopers do under similar conditions?
JURY SELECTION	Who belongs in the jury-eligible population?

A defensible comparison begins with a defensible benchmark.

WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Academic and Student Development Meeting

Thursday, November 19, 2026

3:00 P.M.

Wellness Center, Room 204

Meeting Called By: Maureen Power (Chair) **Minutes**: Nikki Kapurch

Board Members: Maureen Power (Chair), Kelly Brissette (Vice Chair), Kristen Garvey, Maria Caires

WSU Staff: Barry Maloney; Lois Wims; Ashlynn Allain; Carl Herrin; Nikki Kapurch

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

AGENDA

ITEM	RESPONSIBLE	ACTION
1. Administrative Business A. Call to Order	Maureen Power	
2. Academic and Student Development Committee Report A. President's memo to BOT* B. Provost memo to President* C. Sabbatical Summary and Proposal Summaries PowerPoint* D. Approval of AY 2027-2028 Sabbatical Leave Proposals	Maureen Power Lois Wims	A. Informational B. Informational C. Informational **D. vote required**
3. *Administrative Updates* A. Other Business	Maureen Power	
4. *Adjournment*	Maureen Power	4. **vote required**

*Attachments

WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY

President's Office
Phone: 508-929-8020
Fax: 508-929-8191
Email: bmaloney@worcester.edu

TO: Members, WSU Board of Trustees

FROM: Barry M. Maloney, President

RE: Sabbatical Leaves AY 2027 - 2028

DATE: November 2, 2026

I am pleased to support Provost Wims' recommendation and forward a total of nineteen (19) sabbatical leave proposals (ten for the fall of 2027 and nine for the spring of 2028).

The department chairs have confirmed that the individual study plans for each candidate will enhance their respective departments' course offerings. I also concur with Dr. Wims that each area of study will significantly contribute to the professional development of the scholars and educators involved, ultimately benefiting Worcester State University and its students.

Attached is a copy of Dr. Wims' recommendation and a 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 29, 2026

RE: Sabbatical Recommendations for 2027-2028

After determining eligibility and the support of the department chair, the following individual faculty are recommended to you and to the Board of Trustees for sabbaticals during the 2027-2028 Academic Year:

Fall Semester 2027:

Kyle Allaire	Mathematics
Erika Briesacher	History and Political Science
Kristine Camacho	Education
Amy Cota-McKinley	Psychology
LJ Dawson	Psychology
Aimée Delaney	Criminal Justice
Julie Frechette	Communication
Tanya Mears	History and Political Science
Sebastián Vélez	Biology
Francisco Vivoni	Sociology

Spring Semester 2028:

Mary Clay	Business Administration and Economics

Siri Colom	Sociology
Sarah DiMeo	Occupational Therapy
Charles Fox	Psychology
Aldo Garcia-Guevera	History and Political Science
Susan Mitroka-Batsford	Chemistry
Stacey Parker	Visual and Performing Arts
Seth Surgan	Psychology
Heidi Wojcik	Education

2027-2028 Sabbaticals

WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY

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 their applications to chairs from cognate departments.
- 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.

Review of Sabbatical Applications

- 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 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 equal to twice the length of their leave and are responsible for reimbursing the university should they not return for the required timeframe.
- Recipients also must report on the sabbatical activities upon their return.

Estimated Cost for 2027-2028

- Approximately 67 course sections will need to be covered by adjuncts for the sabbaticals.
- Sections are offered based on student demand, not on faculty availability.
- A conservative average cost of $6.5K per section, this equals $435,500
- Funds to cover this expense will be included in the adjunct line of the FY 27 budget.

Fall Semester 2027

- Kyle Allaire, Mathematics
- Erika Briesacher, History & Political Science
- Kristine Camacho, Education
- Amy Cota-McKinley, Psychology
- LJ Dawson, Psychology
- Aimée Delaney, Criminal Justice
- Julie Frechette, Communication
- Tanya Mears, History & Political Science
- Sebastián Vélez, Biology
- Francisco Vivoni, Sociology

Spring Semester 2028

- Mary Clay, Business Administration & Economics
- Siri Colom, Sociology
- Sarah DiMeo, Occupational Therapy
- Charles Fox, Psychology
- Aldo Garcia-Guevara, History & Political Science
- Susan Mitroka-Batsford, Chemistry
- Stacey Parker, Visual & Performing Arts
- Seth Surgan, Psychology
- Heidi Wojcik, Education

Kyle Allaire

- Department: Mathematics
- Sabbatical Term: Fall 2027

- Project: *Data Science and Sports Analytics*
  - Take graduate courses to address gaps in data science education, including Bayesian statistics and machine learning
  - Pursue a data analysis project using data from professional sports leagues
  - Work will support WSU mathematical students and will be used to mentor students in independent studies or undergraduate research projects involving data science

Erika Briesacher

- Department: History & Political Science
- Sabbatical Term: Fall 2027

- Project: *Make Me a Mask: Material/Culture of a Pandemic* Manuscript Completion **and** *Plots, Scandals, and Villains: A View of World History*
  - Finish book manuscript on historical context of facemasks during Covid-19 and two in-progress scholarly articles
  - Begin working on a preliminary manuscript and proposal for a popular history text organized around plots, scandals, and villains

Kristine Camacho

- Department: Education
- Sabbatical Term: Fall 2027

- Project: *Understanding Workforce Capacity Issues in Rural School Districts*
  - Examine the ways that the rural context shapes districts' ability to provide comprehensive school psychological services
  - Raise awareness of the issues that rural districts face while advocating for access to more equitable services for students in these locations

Amy Cota-McKinley

- Department: Psychology
- Sabbatical Term: Fall 2027

- Project: From Experience to Practice: A Reflective Inquiry into Developing an Academic Leadership Identity
  - Critically examine and synthesize development as an academic leader in the transition from faculty member to department chair
  - Culminate in a scholarly manuscript for submission to a peer-reviewed journal and a presentation or conference proposal

LJ Dawson

- Department: Psychology
- Sabbatical Term: Fall 2027

- Project: *Critical Participatory Action Research with LGBTQ+ students*
  - Conduct Critical Participatory Action Research with WSU LGBTQ+ students to qualitatively examine their lived experiences as college students
  - Findings would then be shared with queer health conferences, college student affairs administrators, and conferences focusing on the scholarship of teaching and learning

Aimée Delaney

- Department: Criminal Justice
- Sabbatical Term: Fall 2027

- Project: Research and Book Proposal on Multi-Disciplinary Issues surrounding Family Violence
  - Conduct research and submit final book proposal to publisher by Jan. 2028
  - Book is intended to be used by academics and practitioners and will offer evidence-based material that serve to prevent violence within families

Julie Frechette

- Department: Communication
- Sabbatical Term: Fall 2027

- Project: *Broadcasting #MeToo: Institutional Power, Survivor Justice, and Workplace Complicity on Apple TV's "The Morning Show"*
  - Complete manuscript draft and identify opportunities for conference and publication
  - Research findings will be incorporated into WSU courses addressing Media Criticism, Literacy. & Ethics, Gender and Media, Communication Theory, and Organizational Communication

Tanya Mears

- Department: History & Political Science
- Sabbatical Term: Fall 2027

- Project: *Happy the Youth Who Very Shortly Dies: A Study of New England Execution Literature Featuring People of African Descent*
  - Extend scholarly article on early colonial literature and Puritans' attitudes towards race
  - Identify publishers and submit for publication

Sebastián Vélez

- Department: Biology
- Sabbatical Term: Fall 2027

- Project: *Invertebrates of Hispaniola, Harvard Museum of Natural History*
  - Advance research on the terrestrial macroinvertebrates of Hispaniola and Puerto Rico and produce an illustrated field guide expanding on existing arthropod checklists
  - The collected specimens be used to create a sustainable pipeline of feasible research opportunities in organismal biology at WSU

Francisco Vivoni

- Department: Sociology
- Sabbatical Term: Fall 2027

- Project: *Cobblestone Streets and the Right to the City: Informal Urbanism in Worcester, MA and San Juan, Puerto Rico*
  - Conduct an extensive literature review of current informal urbanism scholarship and qualitative data collection and analysis through community-based participatory methods
  - Prepare a manuscript for presentation in a regional academic conference and the publication of findings in a peer-reviewed edited volume
  - Support the continued growth of an ongoing research agenda on skateboarding and informal urbanism

Mary Clay

- Department: Business Administration & Economics
- Sabbatical Term: Spring 2028

- Project: *AI and the Future of Accounting Education: Adapting Accounting Curricula for an Evolving Profession*
  - Produce a survey-based study of accounting faculty adoption of AI tools
  - Provide current research and practical information that can be used to evaluate and enhance WSU's Business and Accounting curriculum

Siri Colom

- Department: Sociology
- Sabbatical Term: Spring 2028

- Project: Audio Production & Return to Essay Writing
  - Complete manuscript for peer-review on music in communities to carry grief, defiance, and hope
  - Begin production on three-part audio story on chosen kin and what care looks like when families of origin and public institutions fails
  - Revise manuscript on Re-Engineering Democracy project focused on post-Katrina New Orleans

Sarah DiMeo

- Department: Occupational Therapy
- Sabbatical Term: Spring 2028

- Project: *Occupational Therapy Students' Perceptions of Using Popular Music Videos to Learn Occupational Therapy Models: A Qualitative Reflection Study; Evidence-Based Handwriting Workshop*
  - Conduct qualitative analysis and begin preparation of a manuscript on how OT students perceive music videos to learn OT models
  - Findings could be used to inform future WSU OT courses

Charles Fox

- Department: Psychology
- Sabbatical Term: Spring 2028

- Project: The Psychophysics of Consciousness (or The New-Enchantment of Humankind)
  - Develop a proposal for a transdisciplinary book targeted toward a public audience on a new 21st-century framework for understanding consciousness by exploring the continual human experience of transcendence
  - Develop a book description, outline, and two chapter sample to submit to publishers

Aldo Garcia-Guevara

- Department: History & Political Science
- Sabbatical Term: Spring 2028

- Project: *Military Justice and Social Control in El Salvador*
  - Draft two scholarly articles, one on crime and policing in El Salvador from 1930-1960 and one on gender, politics, and power in El Salvador from 1910-1960
  - Present findings at Central American conferences and to the UCA Press for possible future collaborations

Susan Mitroka-Batsford

- Department: Chemistry
- Sabbatical Term: Spring 2028

- Project: *Investigation of Protein Inhibition Strategies and Structure Activity Relationships*
  - Conduct research to design and synthesize new and efficient nitroxyl (HNO) donors, utilize more complex systems to see the effects of HNO on given proteins and increase the scope of drug targets for HNO

Stacey Parker

- Department: Visual & Performing Arts
- Sabbatical Term: Spring 2028

- Project: *The Meeting of Endangered Species and Humans*
  - Conduct research on critically endangered species with the help of zoo, conservation, and rescue organizations
  - Create mix-media visual series of hand-thrown ceramic bowls and plates and layered images relating to images of endangered species and human groups that live alongside them
  - Series will present as a call to action to halt the decline of the species and educate others on how to be better stewards of the environment

Seth Surgan

- Department: Psychology
- Sabbatical Term: Spring 2028

- Project: *You Are What You See: The Cultural Psychology of Birdwatching*
  - Investigate and research the cultural dynamics of birdwatching and semiotic mediation, meaning-making, and connection to the natural world
  - Present analyzed data at two conferences and develop a manuscript to be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal

Heidi Wojcik

- Department: Education
- Sabbatical Term: Spring 2028

- Project: *Bridging the Science of Reading and the Science of Writing: Researching Evidence-Based Writing Instruction and Demonstration-School Models to Strengthen Preservice Teacher Preparation*
  - Synthesize current frameworks for writing instructions and examine how frameworks can be integrated into preservice teaching preparation at WSU
  - Work will directly inform revisions to ED 306 Methods of Coursework for Preservice Teachers

President's Update

November 2026

President's Message



Some people believe that only the nation's most selective and prestigious universities can produce leaders. They surely haven't been to a Worcester State alumni event, because every one that I attend reinforces my belief that we're exceptionally good at it. We are meeting some stiff headwinds in Massachusetts.

Our alumni not only reach the upper echelons of business – often those they've founded – they also lead in less obvious ways: as the kind of classroom teacher who inspires students, like Joseph Moriarty '15, M.Ed. '23, or as the kind of nurse the other nurses respect and emulate, like Shannen Curtin '17.

Claremont Academy history teacher Moriarty was the 2026 Massachusetts State Universities Educator Alumni Award winner. His principal, Chris LaBreck, said in an award announcement that "Joe creates a classroom environment where students feel empowered to think critically, express themselves authentically, and engage meaningfully with the world around them."

Curtin participated in the Presidential Student Ambassadors program I initiated in 2012, whereby students represent me and the University at events large and small, external and internal. Curtin reports that she had landed her self-described "dream job" in 2019, as an RN in Rady Children's Hospital in San Diego. She said, "My time as a Presidential Student Ambassador gave me opportunities, connections, and skills that made me a better leader, and ultimately a better nurse."

Our Student Affairs division has been fostering leadership development in a more systemic way for several years now, and many student leaders' voices have been captured via a "Faces of Leadership" blog, going back to 2018. I encourage you to take a look!

It's abundantly clear that Worcester State takes students far, providing opportunities for growth in an environment that fosters a sense of belonging and builds confidence. We open them to their full potential. I've seen this realized when they emerge as leaders who not only succeed in their workplaces, but give back to others, in turn helping them succeed.

WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY

Contents

Student Leadership and Civic Engagement.....3

Faculty Leadership, Scholarship, and Teaching.4

Leadership in the Commonwealth and the Community 9

Institutional Leadership and Student Opportunity 10

University Advancement and Philanthropy 13

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE
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WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY



Student Leadership and Civic Engagement

Developing Student Leaders Across Campus

Leadership development at Worcester State extends beyond elected positions and student organizations. Through the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership Development, students can explore their own approaches to leadership, participate in campus activities, and put their skills to work in service of others. The Circles of Leadership program offers a semester-long series of workshops in which students examine their values, develop public speaking skills, and articulate a personal leadership philosophy. The Engage and Excel Leadership Circles offer additional opportunities for students to continue that development. The Faces of Leadership initiative shares student experiences and profiles organizations that contribute to campus life.

These programs complement the everyday leadership students exercise through clubs, peer support, and campus service. Student involvement is also reflected in initiatives such as Thea's Pantry, where students help address food insecurity and learn through direct service. Taken together, these experiences encourage students to see leadership as a practice developed through participation and responsibility to others.

The John J. Binienda Center for Civic Engagement extends that work into the community. Its inaugural Worcester Civic Leaders Program cohort, running from May 2026 to May 2027, places five undergraduates in hands-on nonprofit board experiences, supported by leadership development and training. The inaugural students are Connell Keough '27, Yariel Lopez '29, Lynn Wanjiku '27, Michael Juarez '27, and Nicolas Vanegas '28. The Center's D.C. Leadership Program offers a semester of public-policy study and collaborative work, culminating in meetings in Washington with elected officials, alumni, and organizations involved in public life. These programs give students opportunities to contribute to decisions and organizations beyond campus while developing their own understanding of civic leadership.



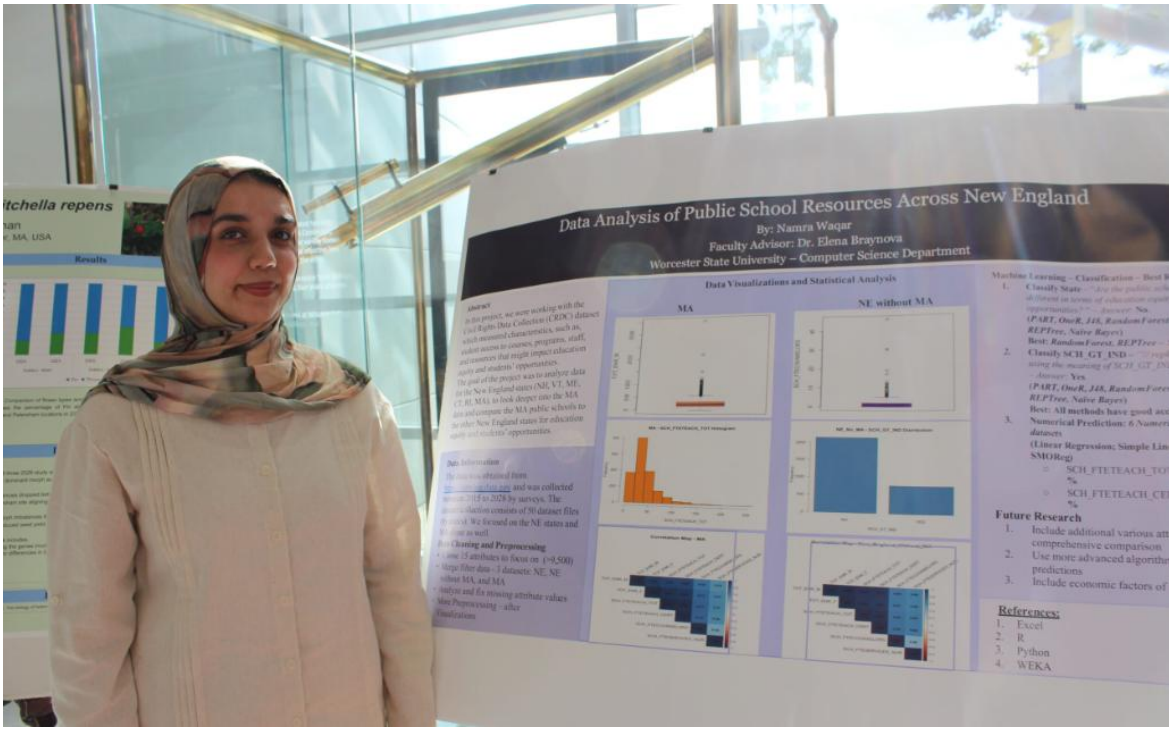
Faculty Leadership, Scholarship, and Teaching

Faculty and Students Lead Mass STEM Week

Worcester State's observance of Massachusetts STEM Week 2026 brought together faculty and students across departments to make scientific inquiry accessible to the wider campus. Working with the Aisiku STEM Center, Dr. Nabin Malakar of Earth, Environment, and Physics, the Center's director; Dr. Aleel Grennan of Biology, PALs coordinator; and Dr. Tim Antonelli of Mathematics, Math Center director, helped organize the week's program. Elizabeth Bradshaw, STEM Center graduate assistant, also contributed to planning and implementation. Faculty collaborators included Dr. Jaime Mancilla, Dr. KC Murphy, Dr. Ali Al-Faris, and Dr. Andrew Burkhardt.

The program combined informal opportunities to explore science, including reverse tie-dye, mathematical origami, and solar telescope observations, with presentations of undergraduate research in the Ghosh Science and Technology Building. Student researchers practiced communicating their projects to audiences beyond their disciplines, while visitors learned about ways to become involved in research. A mobile robotics showcase developed with Worcester Polytechnic Institute added a regional partnership to the week's activities.

Career and research workshops connected the celebration to students' longer-term goals. Dr. Laura Reynolds led a session on planning next steps after college, and Dr. Ali Al-Faris presented on how to become involved in research. The week illustrated the work of faculty and student organizers who make academic exploration a shared campus experience and help students find opportunities to pursue it further.



Chemistry Faculty and Students Advance Research and Professional Experience

Worcester State chemistry faculty and students are extending their work beyond the classroom through research, professional development, and internships. Dr. Jeremy Andreatta completed the nine-month Green Chemistry for Climate and Sustainability certificate program through the Yale School of the Environment. Selected for its inaugural cohort of 29 participants from 16 countries, Andreatta developed a capstone proposal exploring greener, more sustainable methods of producing diesel fuel additives. He hopes to pursue aspects of that work with undergraduate researchers in his Worcester State laboratory.

Dr. Brian Xu coauthored a paper with researchers including independent research students Jiaze Wu and Joshua Fung-A-Fat in the Journal of the American Chemical Society. The 2026 article, "Breaking the Sensitization-Passivation Trade-Off in Dye-Sensitized Upconversion Nanoparticles through LiLuF4-Enabled Directional Energy Transfer," examines advances in nanoparticle research.

Chemistry students have also gained experience in industrial and biomedical research settings. Sophia Westort completed a summer internship at FLEXcon in Spencer, studying the relationship between adhesive strength and rheological properties. Her work with laboratory testing and statistical analysis led to a co-op opportunity this fall. At UMass Chan Medical School, Emmanuel Afful worked with nanoparticle characterization, chemical reactions, and laboratory procedures, while Xin Xiong researched mesoporous silica nanoparticles and materials for contact lenses, including their potential biomedical applications.

Sean Furlong participated in a program exploring drug and vaccine discovery, including preclinical research and the interdisciplinary work involved in developing new therapies. His group presentation focuses on AI in drug discovery. Lina Tran also completed a summer internship at PraNa Biosciences. Together, these experiences connect students' chemistry coursework with research methods and professional settings in which they can apply and extend what they have learned.



English Faculty Lead Writing, Teaching, and Community Initiatives

English Department faculty are contributing to initiatives that reach across the University, from writing instruction to student journalism and community partnerships. Dr. Cleve Wiese, coordinator of First-Year Writing, is leading workshops to prepare faculty for a vertically integrated writing curriculum. New 200-level writing courses are currently being developed for implementation in the 2027–2028 academic year, extending writing instruction beyond the first-year course into more discipline-focused contexts. Dr. Elizabeth Bidinger, director of the Writing Center, is developing initiatives to strengthen students' reading skills, including workshops led by writing consultants in classrooms.

Dr. Jamie Remillard, director of CTL: The Faculty Development Center, supports teaching and faculty development across campus. Remillard and Wiese also serve as faculty directors of The Wormtown Herald, while Remillard coordinates the University's relationship with the Worcester Guardian, including internship opportunities. Dr. Hardeep Sidhu is overseeing Currents in Teaching and Learning, Worcester State's scholarly journal, during Riley McGuire's fall sabbatical. Dr. Heather Treseler serves as a faculty fellow for the arts and a liaison with the Worcester Art Museum, while Matthew Ortoleva contributes to the new General Education Advisory Board.

Dr. Don Vescio leads Worcester State's administrative AI initiatives, including implementation planning and employee professional development, as well as work on a University-wide AI governance framework. He also serves as co-chair of the Massachusetts Artificial Intelligence Collaborative for Higher Education (MACH), connecting the Commonwealth's nine state universities and 15 community colleges. His conference presentations have explored applications of AI in teaching and scholarship, particularly the importance of human judgment.



Alden Award Recipients Recognized for Teaching

The 2026 George I. Alden Excellence in Teaching Awards recognized Dr. Anne Armstrong, assistant professor of Earth, Environment, and Physics, as the pre-tenure recipient, and Dr. Champika K. Soysa, professor of Psychology, as the tenured recipient. Armstrong integrates real-world environmental datasets into collaborative assignments, including student-created zines that translate data analysis into accessible forms. Soysa has developed a blended teaching approach that uses online preparation and low-stakes practice to support discussion and experimentation in class. Both were honored at the April Academic Achievement Awards ceremony and are scheduled to deliver the 2027 Alden Lecture.

Faculty Publications and Professional Recognition

Dr. Shiko Gathuo, professor of Urban Studies and graduate program coordinator, received a 2026 Katharine F. Erskine Award from YWCA Central Massachusetts in recognition of her professional and community leadership. She also conducted a feasibility study for the organization on adding applied behavior analysis services, presenting her findings to its executive committee.

Dr. Sam O'Connell, professor of Theatre, has placed *Broadway After 9/11: American Identity, Memory, and Trauma in the Twenty-First Century* under contract with Vanderbilt University Press. He also completed the Management Development Program at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education this summer.

Dr. Alison Okuda, associate professor of History, published *Pan-African Resonance: Music, Migration, and Everyday Practice in London and Accra* with Ohio University Press. The book examines connections across the African diaspora through music and everyday life from the 1950s through the 1970s.

Dr. Miriam Plavin-Masterman, professor of Business Administration, and coauthor Alejandro Juárez Crawford received a Highly Recommended distinction in the Smart Thinking category of the 2026 Business Book Awards for *One Size Fits None: Time for an Entrepreneurial Revolution*.

Dr. Siri Colom, associate professor of Sociology, was among the creators of *When We All Get to Heaven*, a ten-part podcast recognized with a 2026 Peabody Award. Drawing on archival recordings from San Francisco's Metropolitan Community Church, the series documents the experiences of a queer Christian community during the AIDS crisis. Colom developed the series with Lynne Gerber and Ariana Nedelman through Eureka Street Productions.

Dr. Lindsey Parker of Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences and colleagues have had "Mapping How Lay Users Seek Voice-Related Health Information: A Search Query Analysis" accepted for publication in the *Journal of Voice*. The study examines how adults search for voice-related health information online, including their choice of resources and the language they use in search queries.

Dr. Joanne Gallagher Worthley of Occupational Therapy and graduate students Jacquelyn Pesa and Madeleine Ferrill published "A Color-Coded World: Occupational Therapy Strategies for People with Color Blindness" in the October issue of *OT Practice*.

Computer Science Faculty Participate in National Curriculum Initiative

Worcester State's Computer Science faculty participated in curriculum discussions through the Mission-Aligned Programs for Computer Science (MAP-CS) cohort, a National Science Foundation-supported research-practice collaboration. The initiative helps liberal arts institutions examine how computer science curricula reflect their missions and local communities. Faculty participation provides an opportunity to consider future directions for the University's program alongside colleagues at other institutions.



Leadership in the Commonwealth and the Community

Mary Jo Marion's Leadership in Education and Public Policy



Mary Jo Marion, associate vice president for University and Community Engagement, has contributed to educational policy and community partnerships in Worcester and across Massachusetts for many years. At Worcester State, she oversees the John J. Binienda Center for Civic Engagement, the Latino Education Institute, and the Office of Multicultural Affairs. She previously chaired mayoral task forces on Latino educational excellence under Worcester Mayors Joseph O'Brien and Joseph Petty, helping inform planning for Worcester Public Schools. Most recently, she and President Barry Maloney were appointed to the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education's 30-member Commissioner Search Advisory Council, which is assisting with the search for the Commonwealth's next Commissioner of Higher Education.

Marion has also helped secure funding for Worcester State students and community programs, including a federal TRIO Student Support Services award that restores TRIO support to the University after more than two decades. The program is housed in the Office of Multicultural Affairs. Marion also serves as principal investigator for *Youth Leaders in Problem Gambling Prevention*, a Massachusetts Department of Public Health services contract funded at $700,000 annually from FY2025 through FY2030. Developed in collaboration with Health Sciences and the Latino Education Institute, the initiative supports youth leadership and public awareness programs aimed at preventing problem gambling.

Marion's contributions extend to research on Latino educational opportunity. She coauthored a chapter in *Critical Perspectives on Latino Education in Massachusetts* with Urban Studies faculty Dr. Thomas Conroy and Dr. Timothy Murphy and Sociology professor Dr. Alex Briesacher, examining educational disparities and students' experiences of belonging in Worcester Public Schools. She also helped bring these issues into wider discussion through Worcester State's 2025 symposium on Latino educational pathways, which convened educators and policymakers from across Massachusetts.

Institutional Leadership and Student Opportunity

Career Development Center Expands Opportunities for Students

Worcester State's Career Development Center (CDC) is expanding its work with employers and academic departments to create more opportunities for students to explore careers before graduation. On October 21, the University hosted its inaugural Fall Internship Fair, developed in response to a recommendation from the CDC's 2025 Advisory Board. The fair brought 40 employers and more than 200 students together to discuss spring and summer internships. The fall timing was intended to reach employers while they were actively recruiting for those opportunities.

The CDC is also widening its employer partnerships, building on relationships with smaller local organizations while developing connections with larger employers whose operations span multiple professional fields. Partners identified in this effort include Polar Beverages, Pepsi, Amazon, TJX, UniBank, BJ's Wholesale Club, and H&R Block. Because these employers recruit across different functions, their participation can create opportunities for students in academic programs ranging from business and computer science to communications and human resources.

Beginning in spring 2027, the CDC plans to introduce the first phase of a multiyear university-wide Career Ecosystem initiative. The initial work will bring employer representatives into classrooms to discuss professional expectations and opportunities within their organizations. The Center has begun working with employers to identify relevant academic programs and potential classroom connections. One example is Enterprise Mobility, which has recruited Worcester State student-athletes studying business. The planned approach would connect such employers with students earlier in their academic experience and encourage faculty participation in career preparation. Future phases envision broader alumni mentoring and additional experiential learning opportunities.



Jonathan Walker Advances Operational Excellence at Worcester State

Since joining Worcester State in 2018, Jonathan Walker has helped strengthen the University's approach to institutional risk management while improving administrative operations. As Institutional Risk Officer and Director of Operational Excellence, Walker works across University divisions to identify potential risks and improve procedures. Recent examples include reviewing screening requirements for volunteers working with student-athletes, collaborating with the Massachusetts State Universities Council of Presidents on policies concerning minors on campus, and examining safety procedures for University-sponsored field trips.

Through the University's Operational Excellence (OpEx) initiative, Walker works with campus colleagues to simplify administrative processes. One recent project redesigned the Printing and Publications request process, replacing multiple email exchanges with an electronic form that collects necessary information and provides automated status updates. Another initiative converted a widely used laboratory safety form to an electronic process, reducing paperwork and administrative costs. Additional projects under development include improvements to independent study registration and study abroad approvals.

Walker emphasizes the importance of involving employees in developing practical solutions. His work with faculty on campus printing needs, for example, demonstrated that paper remains the most effective option for certain instructional activities. A Worcester State alumnus, Walker brings a personal connection to these efforts, viewing improvements in risk management and University operations as ways to better support the campus community.

Enrollment Management Leadership Supports Student Success and College Access

Chaired by Vice President for Enrollment Ryan Forsythe, Worcester State's Enrollment Management Committee brings colleagues from multiple divisions together to examine student recruitment and retention. Working with Enrollment Management leadership and Institutional Research, the committee uses the University's Strategic Enrollment Plan to guide discussions of student attrition, prospective-student information, and the coordination of services and resources. Its work provides a forum for shared responsibility for enrollment challenges that extend beyond any single office.

Beyond campus, members of the Enrollment Management team contribute their expertise through regional professional organizations and community outreach, including work with the New England Association for College Admission Counseling, public schools, community-based organizations, and Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority programs. Through advising and outreach, these professionals help prospective students and families navigate college admissions and financing.

Worcester State Plans Classroom Technology Modernization

Worcester State is working with Vantage Technology Consulting Group on a University-wide initiative to modernize classroom technology and establish consistent standards for teaching and learning spaces. Co-sponsored by Academic Affairs and Administration and Finance, the project builds on an earlier assessment conducted in 2019, whose recommendations were not fully implemented because of the

COVID-19 pandemic. Provost Lois Wims and Vice President Kathleen Eichelroth are executive sponsors, with Chief Information Officer Anupam Singh and Strategic Portfolio Officer Jesilka Cortez coordinating the work. Faculty and staff have contributed through focus groups and workshops, while a September student forum attracted more than 100 participants. Surveys also gathered responses from 255 students, 61 faculty, and 54 faculty and staff.

The project will establish five classroom technology standards to guide future equipment purchases and upgrades, along with the support needed to maintain them. These standards will address foundational technology across classrooms and specialized requirements for different instructional spaces. Planning will also consider room conditions such as acoustics and lighting, along with electrical capacity. The University expects to complete its modernization plan by mid-December 2026, with initial improvements to selected classrooms planned for summer 2027 in preparation for the fall semester. Recommendations for phased implementation and financing will be presented to the Board of Trustees in January 2027.



University Advancement and Philanthropy

Building Support for the Believe in Beyond Campaign

University Advancement continues to prepare the campus community for broader participation in the Believe in Beyond campaign. Campus-wide training on October 30 helped faculty and staff become more familiar with the campaign's priorities and how to communicate its goals to external audiences. Additional engagement with the Foundation Board and Board of Trustees is planned for November and January.

Meanwhile, the Office of Grants and Sponsored Research is working with campus partners to identify funding opportunities for academic programs and student services, including improvements to STEM laboratories and support for Thea's Pantry. These efforts will help connect institutional needs with prospective donors and grant opportunities.

Recent Gifts Support Scholarships and University Priorities

University Advancement reports several significant gifts supporting Worcester State students and academic programs. A $100,000 gift from an alumna and her husband will support STEM scholarships, research, and equipment. Additional commitments include a $90,000 unrestricted planned gift and a $30,000 gift supporting University lecture programming. Other recent gifts provide scholarship funding and unrestricted support, including contributions from alumni and members of the University's boards. Development and Alumni Relations also secured a new four-year Adopt-a-Scholar agreement and continues to cultivate additional commitments. Donors have indicated their intention to commit $18,000 over five years, which would qualify for a $6,000 matching contribution to support poetry programming.

Alumni Engagement and Scholarship Support

The Office of Alumni Relations expanded its outreach through two West Coast events, held at the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco and the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art in Los Angeles. These gatherings complemented individual donor cultivation visits in Portland, Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. Closer to campus, Worcester State hosted its Scholarship Donor Brunch on November 1, bringing together scholarship recipients and the individuals whose generosity supports their education. Advance registrations included 177 students and 104 donors and guests. Development and Alumni Relations also coordinated the distribution of 499 student thank-you notes to scholarship donors, helping strengthen the personal connections behind the University's scholarship programs.

WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY

President's Office
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TO: Members, WSU Board of Trustees

FROM: Barry M. Maloney, President

DATE: November 2, 2026

RE: Recommendation for Honorary Degree – Gregg Rosen '86

I am writing to seek your approval to award an honorary degree to Gregg Rosen '86. Mr. Rosen's nomination was vetted by the Speaker and Awards Committee and recommended by the All-University Committee.

Distinction and Professional Achievement

A Worcester native, Gregg recognized early on the transformative value of a Worcester State education. After earning his degree in business in 1986, he built an exceptional career in financial institution design and development. As President of NES Group, he has established his company as an industry leader in bank architecture, design, and project management—achievements he consistently attributes to the strong foundation he received at Worcester State.

Service and Philanthropy

Since graduating and marrying fellow alum Pamela Swartz '87, Gregg has dedicated himself to supporting his alma mater. His service and contributions to Worcester State include:

- Serving as a current member and past President of the Worcester State Foundation Board.
- Participating on numerous University committees and serving as an active mentor to current students.
- Hosting regional alumni events to foster engagement across the broader university community.
- Establishing the *Gregg Rosen '86 and Pamela Swartz Rosen '87 Endowed Scholarship* alongside his wife, directly easing the financial burden for current students.

Recommendation

Few individuals embody "Lancer Pride" as fully as Gregg Rosen. His entrepreneurial success, commitment to student mentorship, and sustained philanthropic support make him an ideal candidate for an honorary degree.

I request your favorable action on my recommendation to approve Gregg Rosen as a recipient of an honorary degree at today's November 19, 2026, meeting of the Board of Trustees.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER & SUCCESS GRANT INITIATIVE

ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER

Growing Our Impact: Now part of Enrollment Management, the ASC has doubled in size through SUCCESS grant funding, expanding its capacity to support students while remaining in its familiar campus location.

Our Mission: To empower students with the support, connections, and resources they need to persist, succeed, and graduate.

SUCCESS GRANT OVERVIEW

Expanding Our Reach & Student Support

- Increased Staffing: SUCCESS funding has allowed the Academic Success Center to expand its team and strengthen student support services through September 2027.
- Reduced Caseloads: Additional staff allow for smaller advising caseloads, creating more opportunities for personalized attention and proactive outreach.

SUCCESS GRANT OVERVIEW

- Case Management Approach: Developing a coordinated model that integrates academic advising, early intervention, and holistic student support.
- Expanded Student Populations: Supporting new and returning students, including targeted cohorts within each population.
- Greater Student Engagement: Building stronger connections with students through consistent communication, individualized guidance, and ongoing support.

HOW WE SUPPORT STUDENTS

- Academic Success & Student Support: Providing guidance, resources, and individualized support to help students achieve their academic goals.
- Retention & Early Support: Identifying students who may need additional assistance and connecting them with support before challenges become barriers to success.

What Case Management Looks Like

Coordinated support. Whole student. Better outcomes.



Cohorts We Focus On

Targeted support for students with the greatest need.



First-Year Students



Transfer Students



Pell-Eligible Students



Academic Warning Students



Hispanic/Latine Students



Undeclared Students



First-Generation Students

WHY THIS MATTERS

Students are more likely to persist when someone consistently notices, follows up, and helps navigate barriers.



Advising | Academic Support | Financial Aid | Belonging & Community | Outreach & Support

SUPPORT TODAY. SUCCESS TOMORROW.

SUPPORT TODAY.

SUCCESS TOMORROW.