Name changes that affected the Westfield State University

There were three Acts or Resolves that created Westfield State College:

Acts and Resolves of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, March 31, 1834. Chapter CLXIX: An Act to Establish the Massachusetts School Fund. This Act provided a permanent fund for the “aid and encouragement of common schools.” The funds were to be derived from the sale of lands in the state of Maine. The funds were to be distributed to communities on a matching basis for sums raised by each community to support its common schools.

Acts and Resolves of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, April 19, 1838. Chapter LXX: Resolves Relative to Qualifying Teachers for Common Schools. This Resolve authorized the Governor to spend $10,000 to match $10,000 raised by Horace Mann from private sources for the purpose of “qualifying teachers for the common schools in Massachusetts.” In canvassing various communities for financial support, Mann discovered that Barre was willing to fund teachers so he started Barre Normal School there.

Acts and Resolves of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, March 21, 1870. Chapter 106: An Act Relating to the Normal Schools and Board of Education. The Act identifies Westfield as the site of a Normal School for the first time and gives general management responsibility to the Massachusetts Board of Education.

Written by Brian Hubbard, May 14, 2004 (Was done for the President’s Office at that time – Woodward) Documentation in 1A-4-3-8

Name Change Date: 1932

Name of Normal School in Westfield Becomes State Teachers’ College

Springfield Union, April 2, 1932

Normal School is Teachers’ College: Official Change of Name Takes Place with Signing of Bill By Gov. Ely

Springfield Daily News, April 2, 1932

This article states that the name change took place because students had a hard time with their normal school diplomas when applying to graduate programs. They had to take additional exams to prove they could do the work.

* Articles in Scrapbook Number 6

Name Change Date: April 4, 1960
Chap. 284. A N A C T AUTHORIZING THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO DESIGNATE ANY STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE AS A STATE COLLEGE.

Be it enacted, etc., as follows:
Section 1 of chapter 73 of the General Laws, as most recently amended by section 2 of chapter 246 of the acts of 1959, is hereby further amended by adding at the end the following paragraph:—
The board of education may designate any state teachers college as a state college; provided, however, that any provisions contained in a general or special law, ordinance or by-law, rule or regulation, or judicial order or decree relative to a state teachers college shall continue to apply to any state teachers college designated as a state college. Approved April 4, 1960.

Name Change Date: May 24, 1968

The name changed to Westfield State University. The name change will help graduates in the global job market. It will also help to attract top students to the institution by making Massachusetts state schools more competitive with other state schools that have already changed their names to universities across the country. Massachusetts is the 46th state to change their state schools to universities.