



Fitchburg State University

Board of Trustees

Amended on March 29, 2018 at 8:51 AM EDT

Date and Time

Tuesday April 3, 2018 at 8:00 AM EDT

Location

Presidents' Hall, Mazzaferro Center, 291 Highland Ave., Fitchburg, MA 01420

Notice of a Meeting of the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees
Tuesday, April 3, 2018, at 8:00 a.m. in Presidents' Hall, Mazzaferro Center, 291
Highland Ave., Fitchburg, MA 01420

Agenda

	Purpose	Presenter	Duration
I. Opening Items			
A. Record Attendance and Guests			
B. Call the Meeting to Order			
C. Public Comments			
D. Approve Minutes from the Board of Trustees January 23, 2018 meeting - VOTE (12-17/18)	Approve Minutes		
Approve minutes for Board of Trustees and Fitchburg State Foundation joint meeting on January 23, 2018			
II. Tenure			
A. Tenure- VOTE (13-17/18)	Vote		
III. Notifications			
A. Personnel Actions (N05-17/18)	FYI		
B. Promotions - (N06-17/18)	FYI		
C. Financial Reports (N07-17/18)	FYI		
IV. Student Affairs Report - Dr. Laura Bayless			

V. Chair's Report

- A.** Presidential Evaluations - Letter from Commissioner Santiago FYI

VI. President's Report

- A.** Collective Bargaining FYI
- B.** Theater Block FYI
- C.** DHE Trustee Conference March 1, 2018 FYI
- D.** Future Falcon Day FYI
- E.** Commencement FYI
- F.** 2018-2019 Academic Calendar FYI
- G.** News Articles FYI

VII. Executive Session

- A.** Executive Session Vote

It is requested that the Board of Trustees enter into executive session to discuss honorary degrees, and not return to public session. VOTE (14-17/18)

VIII. Closing Items

- A.** Adjourn Meeting Vote

Cover Sheet

Approve Minutes from the Board of Trustees January 23, 2018 meeting - VOTE (12-17/18)

Section: I. Opening Items

Item: D. Approve Minutes from the Board of Trustees January 23, 2018
meeting - VOTE (12-17/18)

Purpose: Approve Minutes

Submitted by:

Related Material:

Minutes for Board of Trustees and Fitchburg State Foundation joint meeting on January 23, 2018

DRAFT



Fitchburg State University

Minutes

Board of Trustees and Fitchburg State Foundation joint meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday January 23, 2018 at 8:00 AM

Location

Landry Arena, 1000 John Fitch Highway, Fitchburg, MA 01420

Notice of a Meeting of the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees
Tuesday, January 23, 2018, at 8:00 a.m. at the Landry Arena, 1000 John Fitch Highway,
Fitchburg, MA 01420

This meeting will be a joint meeting with the Fitchburg State University Foundation

Trustees Present

A. Cochran, C. Stimpson, D. Nieto, D. Phillips, D. Tiernan, F. O'Donnell, L. Barrieau

Trustees Absent

A. Clementi, C. Stover, D. Irving, G. Rodriguez-Parker

Trustees Arrived Late

C. Stimpson

Ex-Officio Members Present

R. Lapidus

Non Voting Members Present

R. Lapidus

Guests Present

Cathy Canney, Chris Hendry, Cindy Carroll, Eric Gregoire, G. Doiron, Jay Bry, Jessica Murdoch, John Mahan, Laura Bayless, Marilyn Siderwicz, Martin F. Connors, Jr., Mary

Beth McKenzie, Richard Healey, Scott Healey, Steve Swartz, Tony Emerson, Tony Mercadante

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

D. Phillips called a meeting of the board of trustees of Fitchburg State University to order on Tuesday Jan 23, 2018 @ 8:13 AM at Landry Arena, 1000 John Fitch Highway, Fitchburg, MA 01420.

C. Public Comments

There were none.

D. Approve Minutes from the Board of Trustees November 14, 2017 meeting - VOTE (11-17/18)

A. Cochran made a motion to approve minutes from the Board of Trustees on 11-14-17.

L. Barrieau seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

E. Approve minutes from the Fitchburg State Foundation Oct. 4, 2017 Meeting

T. Mercadante made a motion to approve the minutes from the Fitchburg State Foundation University Board meeting on October 4, 2017. S. Foster seconded the motion. The Foundation Board VOTED to approve the motion.

II. Strength and Conditioning

A. Presentation by Dr. Danielle Wigmore and Dr. Jeff Godin, Exercise & Sport Science Department

C. Stimpson arrived late.

President Lapidus expressed the desire to have the meeting at the Landry Arena so both boards could see the newly renovated space. He asked for the Exercise and Sports Science and Athletics Departments to present at this meeting as the facility will play a significant part of their program moving forward.

Dr. Danielle Wigmore, Chair, Exercise and Sports Science Department introduced herself. She provided background on what line of work students get into when they graduate. The department wanted to provide students a more in depth program in Strength and Conditioning. The Landry Arena is now a place to train these students. Dr. Wigmore stated that she is excited about the collaboration with Athletics.

Dr. Godin, Associate Professor, and Head Strength & Conditioning Coach presented a power point. He provided background on how he came to work at Fitchburg State. He provided history on the progression of the Exercise and Sports Science Department. (Attached) The department is thankful to have a space to create meaningful preparation for its students. Fitchburg State alums have done well in this program and have secured impressive jobs in their respective fields. The university now has the fitness technology software found at top schools.

B. Presentation by Ms. Sue Lauder, and Mr. James McGuire, Athletics

Ms. Sue Lauder, Director of Athletics, introduced herself. She stated the Landry Arena would allow university teams to practice in a space that is specific to their needs. She explained how the space would be used by Athletics. In the event of inclement weather, the different sports teams would be able to practice indoors. The Recreation Center has been overused by the Athletes which displaced other students. Fitchburg State now has an advantage as none of our sister schools have in indoor facility like this. It is believed that this uniqueness will provide recruiting advantage. Ms. Lauder stated that the Athletics and Exercise and Sports Science Departments have a great relationship. She next introduced James McGuire, Assistant Strength & Conditioning Coach.

James McGuire expressed his gratitude to present at this meeting. He explained what they do specifically in Strength & Conditioning. He presented a power point. (Attached) He talked about three software programs that students will use that are state-of-art.

There was a discussion on student injuries, equipment, coaching staff, and measuring success. There will be an opportunity for Board members to tour the facility and to use the equipment in the future.

III. Alumni Relations

A. Presentation by Mr. Christopher Hendry, Vice President of Institutional Advancement

Chris Hendry presented a quick overview of the Alumni Association. He presented a power point. (Attached) He said that a majority of our alumni live a few hours from Fitchburg State University. He presented and discussed statistics. He discussed the importance of a strong Alumni program. Alumni engagement really helps with fundraising he said. A Student Government Association liaison sits on the Alumni Board to help us understand and connect with students. He explained a recent meeting at Endicott College to review their Alumni mentoring program. The university is excited to see how we can get an Alumni mentoring program here. He stated he would be remiss if he did not ask Board members to consider a gift to the institution. The university coaches do a great deal of fundraising, and they need help. The Alumni Office had planned a day of giving in collaboration with Sue Lauder and Athletics that was successful.

IV. Notifications

A. Personnel Actions (N04-17/18)

The personnel actions were presented for informational purposes.

V. President's Report

A. Opening of the Spring Semester

President Lapidus said the semester started smoothly and uneventfully. Enrollment continues to look good but, is slightly down, typical of spring semester. The university has a diverse array of programming scheduled for this semester.

B. Update on Collective Bargaining

Collective bargaining contracts are still being negotiated. The Presidents met and have encouraged teams to expedite the process. It is hoped that progress on all three contracts will be forthcoming.

C. Winter Commencement

The Winter Commencement held in December was a great evening despite the weather challenges. The President encouraged the Board to participate in the future ceremonies.

D. Theatre Block

The president discussed the Theatre Block event to be held on January 31 with Secretary Ash and collaborators with the city.

E. Search Update

There are a number of searches going on.

F. DHE Trustee Conference March 1, 2018

The annual DHE Trustees conference will take place again this year in Westborough. He encouraged all Board members to attend.

G. News Articles

The news articles were included for informational purposes.

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

C. Stimpson made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

A. Cochran seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

D. Phillips

Cover Sheet

Tenure- VOTE (13-17/18)

Section: II. Tenure
Item: A. Tenure- VOTE (13-17/18)
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material: MEMO to BOT re TENURE 2018.pdf
VOTE Tenure 2018.pdf



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Richard S. Lapidus, Ph.D.
 PRESIDENT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Trustees
FROM: Richard S. Lapidus, President
RE: Tenure Recommendations
DATE: April 3, 2018

Pursuant to the MSCA Collective Bargaining Contract, I am **recommending tenure** for the following faculty/library members effective September 1, 2018:

Tenure with Promotion to Associate Professor:

Current Rank

Catherine Buell	Mathematics	Assistant Professor
Lisa Grimm	Biology/Chemistry	Assistant Professor
Katherine Jewell	Economics, History & Political Science	Assistant Professor
Mathangi Krishnamurthy	Biology/Chemistry	Assistant Professor
Denise LaFrance	Education	Assistant Professor
Monica Maldari	Exercise and Sports Science	Assistant Professor
Elisabet Takehana	English Studies	Assistant Professor

Tenure:

Patricia Arend	Behavioral Sciences	Associate Professor
Steven Edwards	English Studies	Associate Professor
David Heikkinen	Exercise and Sports Science	Assistant Professor
Kevin McCarthy	Communications Media	Assistant Professor
Joann Nichols	Education	Associate Professor
Sean Rollins	Biology/Chemistry	Associate Professor
Renee Scapparone	Business Administration	Associate Professor
David Svolba	Humanities	Associate Professor

**Fitchburg State University
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

TO: Board of Trustees	DATE: April 3, 2018
FROM: The President	REQUEST NUMBER: 13-17/18
SUBJECT: Tenure	

Pursuant to the MSCA Collective Bargaining Contact, I am recommending tenure for the following faculty members effective September 1, 2018:

Tenure with Promotion to Associate Professor:

Current Rank

Catherine Buell	Mathematics	Assistant Professor
Lisa Grimm	Biology/Chemistry	Assistant Professor
Katherine Jewell	Economics, History & Political Science	Assistant Professor
Mathangi Krishnamurthy	Biology/Chemistry	Assistant Professor
Denise LaFrance	Education	Assistant Professor
Monica Maldari	Exercise and Sports Science	Assistant Professor
Elisabet Takehana	English Studies	Assistant Professor

Tenure:

Patricia Arend	Behavioral Sciences	Associate Professor
Steven Edwards	English Studies	Associate Professor
David Heikkinen	Exercise and Sports Science	Assistant Professor
Kevin McCarthy	Communications Media	Assistant Professor
Joann Nichols	Education	Associate Professor
Sean Rollins	Biology/Chemistry	Associate Professor
Renee Scapparone	Business Administration	Associate Professor
David Svolba	Humanities	Associate Professor

Cover Sheet

Personnel Actions (N05-17/18)

Section: III. Notifications
Item: A. Personnel Actions (N05-17/18)
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: BOT Notifications 04032018.pdf

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Board of Trustees

NOTIFICATIONS

TO: Board of Trustees	DATE: April 3, 2018
FROM: The President	NOTIFICATION NUMBER: 05-17/18
SUBJECT: Personnel Actions	

New Hire

Rebecca Carrasquillo, BS Staff Assistant, Education Coordinator \$48,000.00
Effective: 2/19/18 Upward Bound Math & Science

Rehire

Tina Morin Instructor \$58,517.00
Effective: 9/1/18 Earth & Geographic Sciences

Change in Dept/Supervisor

Kristin Murphy From: Director of Housing From: \$78,322.14
Effective: 7/2/18 To: Director of Title IX Compliance To: \$92,200.00
Human Resources & Payroll Services

Change in Title

Sean Goodlett From: Executive Director \$121,890.00
Effective: 1/22/18 To: Associate Dean
Student Success

Promotion

Kelly Sylvia From: Assistant Director of Donor Relations From: \$60,809.45
Effective: 1/29/18 To: Director of Donor Relations To: \$65,809.45
Alumni & Development

Salary Adjustment

Michelle Cota Staff Assistant From: \$44,243.81
Effective: 1/1/18 Admissions To: \$45,743.81

Gretchen Mayhew Assistant Director From: \$53,000.00
Effective: 1/1/18 Admissions To: \$54,500.00

David Niemi Effective: 1/10/18	Staff Assistant Technology	From: \$55,000.00 To: \$59,000.00
Pamela Mayou Effective: 9/1/2017	Staff Assistant Human Resources & Payroll Services	From: \$54,436.25 To: \$60,000.00
Heidi Swift Effective: 1/1/18	Director of Budgeting Finance	From: \$88,637.40 To: \$95,137.40
Denise Brindle Effective: 12/1/17	Director Financial Aid	From: \$92,142.26 To: \$99,514.00

Retirement

Sue Lauder Effective: 6/1/18	Director of Athletics Athletics	\$124,473.59
Jeffrey Leary Effective: 3/9/18	Staff Assistant Finance/Aux. Services	\$71,949.91
Joseph McAloon Effective: 6/1/18	Associate Professor Business Administration	\$102,613.76
Ann Mrvica Effective: 5/31/18	Professor Communications Media	\$116,056.96

Resignation

Sara Blood Effective: 2/8/18	Staff Assistant Nursing	\$31,200.00
Donald Brickman Effective: 3/30/18	Staff Assistant, Lieutenant University Police	\$71,436.13
Jenna Reis Effective: 8/26/18	Assistant Professor Mathematics	\$60,045.17

Termination

Kristin Helm Effective: 3/14/18	Staff Assistant, Area Coordinator Housing & Residential Services	\$43,824.00
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Cover Sheet

Promotions - (N06-17/18)

Section: III. Notifications
Item: B. Promotions - (N06-17/18)
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: Promotion notification April 3, 2018.pdf

**FITCHBURG STATE
UNIVERSITY
Board of Trustees
NOTIFICATION**

TO: Board of Trustees	DATE:
FROM: The President	April 3, 2018
SUBJECT: Personnel Actions - Promotion	REQUEST NUMBER: N06-17/18

Promotions - Effective September 1, 2018

<u>Promotion to Full Professor:</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Current Rank</u>
Christine Dee	Economics, History & Political Science	Associate Professor
Daneen Deptula	Psychological Science	Associate Professor
Stephen Goldstein	Communications Media	Associate Professor
M. Zachary Lee	Communications Media	Associate Professor
Danielle Wigmore	Exercise and Sports Science	Associate Professor
David Weiss	Behavioral Sciences	Associate Professor

Promotion to Associate Professor:

DeMisty Bellinger-Delfeld	English Studies	Assistant Professor
Deborah Benes	Nursing	Assistant Professor
David Heikkinen	Exercise and Sports Science	Assistant Professor
Wendy Keyser	English Studies	Assistant Professor
Ricky Sethi	Computer Science	Assistant Professor

Cover Sheet

Financial Reports (N07-17/18)

Section: III. Notifications
Item: C. Financial Reports (N07-17/18)
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: Complete_FSU_Qrtly FS_DEC2017.pdf

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Board of Trustees

NOTIFICATIONS

TO: Board of Trustees
FROM: The President
SUBJECT: Financial Reports

DATE: April 3, 2018
NOTIFICATION NUMBER: 07-17/18

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

DECEMBER 31, 2017, 2016 AND 2015

**Fitchburg State University
Executive Summary
Financial Statements for the Six Months Ended
December 31, 2017, 2016 and 2015**

Statements of Net Assets (pages 3-4):

- Total assets increased by approximately \$7.8 million. This was primarily due to an increase in Cash and cash equivalent of \$4.3 million, Bond proceeds (Landry Arena) of \$1.7 million and Investments of \$1.5 million
- Current liabilities decreased due primarily to decrease in salaries and benefits payment outstanding for Dec 2017 payroll.
- Total liabilities increased by \$3.4 million primarily due to increase in unfunded pension liability of \$2.6 million.
- Invested in capital assets, net of related debt decreased to \$113.2 million. Repayment of loans plus depreciation expenses were more than construction expenditure as at Dec 17.
- Total debt from bond issues totaled \$61.3 million.

Statements of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets (pages 5-6):

- Total revenue for the period was \$55.7 million.
- Tuition and fee revenue increased by 7.5%. Scholarship expense for the period was \$5.1 million.
- Auxiliary revenue, which represents operation of the residence halls, totaled \$5.5 million and does not include fees charged for the student housing facility owned and operated by the FSU Foundation Supporting Organization, Inc.
- State appropriations increased slightly to \$19.09 million as compared with \$19.06 million for the same period last year. The increase is due to an increase in the fringe benefit rate charged by the Commonwealth. The fringe benefit rate was 33.5% in fiscal 2017 and is 34.86% for fiscal 2018.
- Total expenditures remained level at \$53.4 million.
- Unrealized investment gain totaled \$595,000. Investment income was \$365,000.
- There was an overall increase in net assets of \$5.1 million for the first six months of the fiscal year.

Statements of Cash Flows (page 7):

- Total cash at December 31, 2017 was \$47.3 million which represents an increase of approximately \$8.98 million over cash balances at June 30, 2017.
- Net cash provided from operations was \$15.8 million.
- Acquisitions of property and equipment totaled \$5.98 million and includes Landry Arena and Southside Chiller projects.

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY
STATEMENTS ON NET ASSETS
DECEMBER 31, 2017, 2016 AND 2015

ASSETS			
	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 30,265,947	\$ 28,831,098	\$ 24,840,021
Cash and cash equivalents-restricted	7,243,646	6,312,656	6,103,903
Bond proceeds	1,734,115	17,273	0
Accounts receivable, net	1,985,334	3,151,192	1,726,256
Loans receivable, net-current portion	707	337	300
Due from other funds	0	8,675	2,294
Other Assets	144,731	482,680	226,528
Total Current Assets	<u>41,374,480</u>	<u>38,803,911</u>	<u>32,899,302</u>
Noncurrent Assets			
Restricted cash and cash equivalents	8,122,443	6,200,421	7,446,786
Investments	15,751,636	14,252,368	16,013,076
Endowment investments	847,433	750,342	814,525
Loans receivable, net	1,886,797	1,976,919	2,023,674
Prepaid expenses	196,175	163,252	131,843
Capital assets, net	174,459,644	173,523,282	175,640,848
Total Noncurrent Assets	<u>201,264,128</u>	<u>196,866,584</u>	<u>202,070,752</u>
Total Assets	242,638,608	235,670,495	234,970,054
Deferred Outflows of Resources			
Deferred outflows - pensions	<u>4,901,385</u>	<u>3,999,478</u>	<u>606,819</u>
Total Assets and Deferred Outflows of Resources	<u>\$ 247,539,993</u>	<u>\$ 239,669,973</u>	<u>\$ 235,576,873</u>

For those charged with governance and internal management use only

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY
STATEMENTS OF NET ASSETS
December 31, 2017, 2016 and 2015

LIABILITIES AND STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Current Liabilities			
Bonds payable-current portion	\$ 3,327,030	\$ 3,148,347	\$ 2,881,194
Capital Lease Obligations, current portion	247,656	-	-
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	3,681,339	3,333,491	2,746,056
Accounts payable-construction	148,743	38,814	72,350
Salaries and benefits payable	1,059,111	2,978,645	1,000,900
Accrued workers compensation-current portion	126,662	110,720	127,529
Accrued faculty payroll	2,701,279	2,647,214	2,530,974
Compensated absences-current portion	3,210,879	3,413,149	3,394,622
Deferred revenue-current portion	10,547,962	10,433,943	10,073,526
Other liabilities	872,752	572,619	591,277
Total Current Liabilities	<u>25,923,413</u>	<u>26,676,942</u>	<u>23,418,428</u>
Noncurrent Liabilities			
HEFA bond payable	1,963,361	2,289,805	2,577,211
MSCBA bonds payable	54,988,682	53,850,143	56,721,750
Capital Lease Obligations	770,316	0	0
Accrued workers compensation	454,356	397,170	457,467
Compensated absences	1,967,958	2,004,548	1,909,475
Due to federal loan programs-Perkins	1,565,622	1,614,881	1,595,019
Due to federal loan programs-Nursing	421,133	414,603	407,096
Unfunded pension liability	12,580,841	9,995,092	5,078,817
Total Noncurrent Liabilities	<u>74,712,270</u>	<u>70,566,242</u>	<u>68,746,835</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>100,635,683</u>	<u>97,243,184</u>	<u>92,165,263</u>
Deferred Inflows of Resources			
Deferred inflows - concessions	1,517,507	1,896,884	2,149,802
Deferred inflows - pensions	51,499	358,503	1,125,969
Total Deferred Inflows of Resources	<u>1,569,006</u>	<u>2,255,387</u>	<u>3,275,771</u>
Net Assets			
Invested in capital assets, net of related debt	117,023,718	116,255,629	114,615,368
Restricted for:			
Non-expendable			
Scholarships & fellowships	468,941	467,162	479,550
Expendable			
Scholarships & fellowships	525,077	503,835	519,486
Loans	276,911	274,961	271,803
Capital projects	1,280,306	846,610	2,698,585
Debt service	9,631,213	9,522,920	8,615,269
Other	930	930	930
Unrestricted	16,128,207	12,299,355	12,934,848
Total Net Assets	<u>145,335,303</u>	<u>140,171,402</u>	<u>140,135,839</u>
Total Liabilities, Deferred Inflows and Net Assets	<u>\$ 247,539,993</u>	<u>\$ 239,669,973</u>	<u>\$ 235,576,873</u>

For those charged with governance and internal management use only

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY
STATEMENT OF REVENUE, EXPENSES & CHANGES IN NET ASSETS
For the Six Months Ended DECEMBER 31, 2017, 2016 and 2015

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Operating Revenues			
Student tuition and fees	\$ 25,006,197	\$ 23,325,478	\$ 23,011,948
Waivers and exemptions	(896,413)	(891,217)	(909,208)
Net student tuition and fees	<u>24,109,785</u>	<u>22,434,261</u>	<u>22,102,740</u>
Federal grants and contracts	4,369,972	4,030,240	4,034,061
State and local grants and contracts	50,590	77,169	160,641
Nongovernmental grants and contracts	295,984	13,546	19,360
Sales and services of educational departments	725,389	636,634	604,692
Auxiliary enterprises:			
Residential life (net of scholarship allowances)	5,527,501	5,252,716	4,748,169
Administrative overhead	25,850	40,842	50,147
Fundraising	79,604	68,494	63,454
Commissions	247,340	255,027	231,181
Miscellaneous	5,412	13,987	27,072
Nursing and Perkins	10,263	14,188	16,373
Total Operating Revenues	<u>35,447,690</u>	<u>32,837,104</u>	<u>32,057,890</u>
Operating Expenses			
Salaries:			
Faculty	10,805,117	10,588,856	10,123,896
Exempt wages	1,611,912	1,705,633	1,777,781
Non-exempt wages	9,490,813	9,540,328	9,375,566
Benefits	6,546,747	8,839,454	6,095,947
Other Operating Expenses:			
Employee related travel	151,594	174,928	174,419
Administrative expense	913,456	990,881	1,048,817
Facility operational supplies	825,868	755,489	814,987
Utilities	1,158,912	1,406,086	909,881
Consultant services	494,445	567,450	326,278
Operational services	859,513	557,891	612,158
Equipment purchases	198,657	269,704	231,622
Equipment maintenance and repairs	378,342	395,447	320,544
Purchased client services-program	107,103	132,671	165,120
Construction and building improvement	643,813	725,196	789,325
Scholarships	5,144,116	4,648,983	4,720,245
Loans & special payments	8,636	-	-
IT expenditures	2,437,153	1,996,044	1,922,736
Depreciation	4,923,512	4,866,762	4,161,607
Bad debt	-	2,506	(50)
Auxiliary enterprises:			
Residential life	5,807,374	4,988,940	4,500,080
Total Operating Expenses	<u>52,507,082</u>	<u>53,153,249</u>	<u>48,070,959</u>
Operating profit/(loss)	<u>(17,059,391)</u>	<u>(20,316,145)</u>	<u>(16,013,069)</u>

For those charged with governance and internal management use only

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY
STATEMENT OF REVENUE, EXPENSES & CHANGES IN NET ASSETS
For the Six Months Ended DECEMBER 31, 2017, 2016 and 2015

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Nonoperating Revenues(Expenses)			
State appropriations	19,092,808	19,060,974	18,335,892
Gifts			176,205
Investment income (net of investment expenses)	364,804	627,975	198,514
Unrealized gain/(loss)	595,676	(321,667)	(576,775)
Interest on capital debt	(903,720)	(415,551)	(696,689)
	<u>19,149,569</u>	<u>18,951,731</u>	<u>17,437,147</u>
Net Nonoperating Revenues (Expenses)			
	<u>19,149,569</u>	<u>18,951,731</u>	<u>17,437,147</u>
Income (loss) before Capital and Endowment Additions	2,090,178	(1,364,414)	1,424,078
Capital appropriations	7,128	74,078	-
Capital grants and gifts	210,881	126,459	126,459
	<u>2,308,187</u>	<u>(1,163,877)</u>	<u>1,550,537</u>
Increase (decrease) in net assets	2,308,187	(1,163,877)	1,550,537
Net Assets - beginning of period	<u>143,027,116</u>	<u>141,335,277</u>	<u>138,585,302</u>
Net Assets - end of period	<u>\$ 145,335,303</u>	<u>\$ 140,171,400</u>	<u>\$ 140,135,839</u>

For those charged with governance and internal management use only

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY
STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
For the Six Months Ended DECEMBER 31, 2017, 2016 and 2015

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Increase in net assets	\$ 2,308,185	\$ (1,163,877)	\$ 1,550,537
Adjustments to reconcile increase in net assets to cash provided by (used by) operating activities:			
(Gain)/loss on marketable securities	(690,058)	415,551	696,689
Depreciation	4,923,512	4,866,762	4,161,607
(Increase) decrease in assets:			
Accounts payable	56,339	(1,556,541)	517,176
Loans receivable	39,994	19,444	(3,406)
Other assets	152,028	(136,362)	85,141
Increase (decrease) in liabilities:			
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	746,227	2,174,728	(2,970,478)
Compensated absences	17,591	(36,796)	24,690
Accrued faculty payroll	(641,467)	(302,091)	(417,017)
Deferred revenue	8,440,751	9,259,628	8,965,539
Other liabilities	505,256	273,289	277,837
	<u>15,858,358</u>	<u>13,813,735</u>	<u>12,888,315</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities			
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Purchase of investments	(205,627)	(2,560,574)	(1,718,147)
Proceeds from the sale of investments	14,473	4,138,260	1,633,603
Acquisition of property, plant and equipment	(5,979,828)	(3,392,161)	(16,027,373)
	<u>(6,170,982)</u>	<u>(1,814,475)</u>	<u>(16,111,917)</u>
Net cash (used by) investing activities			
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Federal loan program	(51,156)	11,621	12,916
Payments of capital debt	(309,839)	(271,468)	(271,764)
Payments of capital lease	(122,165)		
Amortization of bond premiums	(143,865)	(154,761)	(82,383)
	<u>(627,026)</u>	<u>(414,608)</u>	<u>(341,231)</u>
Net cash (used by) financing activities			
Net increase in cash	<u>9,060,350</u>	<u>11,584,652</u>	<u>(3,564,833)</u>
Cash and cash equivalents - beginning of period	<u>38,305,801</u>	<u>29,776,796</u>	<u>41,955,543</u>
Cash and cash equivalents - end of period	<u>47,366,151</u>	<u>41,361,448</u>	<u>38,390,710</u>
Supplemental Disclosures:			
Cash paid for interest	<u>\$ 1,181,207</u>	<u>\$ 1,089,794</u>	<u>\$ 1,297,656</u>

For those charged with governance and internal management use only

Cover Sheet

Presidential Evaluations - Letter from Commissioner Santiago

Section: V. Chair's Report
Item: A. Presidential Evaluations - Letter from Commissioner Santiago
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: Letter from Commissioner Santiago.pdf



Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

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Carlos E. Santiago, *Commissioner*
Chris Gabrieli, *Chairman*
Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

December 15, 2017

Mr. Donald R. Irving.
Chair, Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees
Fitchburg State University
160 Pearl Street
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Dear Chair Irving:

Thank you for providing me with the FY17 evaluation of President Richard Lapidus. I appreciate the Executive Summary of the board on President Lapidus' performance and goals. I also acknowledge that the evaluation process was informed by President Lapidus' report on goal performance for the 2016-17 academic year.

I have had the opportunity to discuss the results of the evaluation in depth with President Lapidus. I appreciate his openness to presenting the challenges and opportunities as well as the accomplishments of Fitchburg State University over the last year.

It seems to me that President Lapidus has now entered a phase of his presidency where his goals and initiatives are clearly understood by the campus to be his own. He succeeded a long-serving president that highly touted FSU's accomplishments. I believe that President Lapidus brings a fresh perspective that seeks to realistically appraise the institution's challenges and to arrive at workable long-term solutions to address them.

I believe that President Lapidus fully understands that diversity among the FSU student body has been changing and that ensuring student success is a priority. There is certainly evidence that efforts to reduce achievement gaps between white and African-American students seems to be working although continued efforts will be necessary. FSU has also focused on student retention and I believe these initiatives will pay off over time.

President Lapidus is quite aware that enrollment challenges will continue to occupy his time and effort as well as that of his staff in the years to come. His focus on online learning and bringing new populations of students into the fold will be important in the years to come.

I am satisfied that President Lapidus brings a strong and steady hand to the management of Fitchburg State University's affairs. While he has only been at the helm for a few years, I would characterize his leadership as that of a careful and prudent steward of the institution. I value his perspective and counsel.

At this time, the Department of Higher Education has not received the necessary salary parameters for campus presidents. When these guidelines are announced, the maximum increase will be split evenly between the respective recommendations of the Board and the Commissioner as we have done in the past. Once I receive guidance from the Department of Administration and Finance I will ask for you to verify a specific salary increase recommendation for President Lapidus. Nonetheless, I am pleased to join the Board in recommending the maximum allowable increase based on President Lapidus' performance for FY17.

I commend and thank the Board of Trustees for assisting me in this important review process.

Sincerely,

Carlos E. Santiago
Commissioner

c. Richard Lapidus, President, Fitchburg State University
Chris Gabrieli, Chair, Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

Cover Sheet

2018-2019 Academic Calendar

Section: VI. President's Report
Item: F. 2018-2019 Academic Calendar
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: 2018-2019 Academic Calendar.pdf



160 Pearl Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420-2697

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www.fitchburgstate.edu

Richard S. Lapidus, Ph.D.

PRESIDENT

2018-2019 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

FALL 2018			
Sept	3	Monday	Labor Day - NO CLASSES; Residence Halls open for First Year Students
	4	Tuesday	Development Day for Faculty;
	5	Wednesday	President's address; Department meetings; Residence Halls open for all students
	6	Thursday	CLASSES BEGIN AT 8:00 a.m.; New student advising
	13	Thursday	Final day to drop a course
	18	Tuesday	CTL Professional Development Program
	20	Thursday	Final day to add a course with a Red Card
Oct	8	Monday	Columbus Day - NO CLASSES
	9	Tuesday	Final day for making up Incomplete grades from previous semester
	12	Friday	Deficiency grades due
	15-Nov 2		Advising period
	16	Tuesday	CTL Professional Development Program
Nov	5-9		Registration for Spring classes
	12	Monday	Veteran's Day Observed- NO CLASSES
	19	Monday	Final day for withdrawal from courses
	20	Tuesday	CTL Professional Development Program
	20	Tuesday	Thanksgiving recess begins at 4:45 p.m.
	25	Sunday	Thanksgiving recess ends
Dec	12	Wednesday	FINAL DAY OF CLASSES
	13-14, 17-19		Final Examinations
	20	Thursday	Snow day for Final Examinations
	21	Friday	Commencement 6:30 p.m.
	22	Saturday	Snow Day for Commencement - 2:00 p.m.

Spring 2019			
Jan	17	Thursday	Faculty Development Day
	18	Friday	Department meetings
	21	Monday	Martin Luther King Day – NO CLASSES
	22	Tuesday	CLASSES BEGIN at 8:00 a.m.: CTL Professional Development Program
	29	Tuesday	Final day to drop a course
Feb	5	Tuesday	Final day to add a course with a Red Card
	14	Thursday	Final day for making up Incomplete grades
	18	Monday	U.S. Presidents' Day - NO CLASSES
	19	Tuesday	CTL Professional Development Program
Mar	8	Friday	Spring vacation begins 4:45 p.m.; Residence halls close at 7:00 p.m.
	15	Friday	Deficiency grades due
	17	Sunday	Spring vacation ends; Residence halls reopen at 9:00 a.m.
	18-April 5		Advising period
	19	Tuesday	CTL Professional Development Program
Apr	5	Friday	Final day for withdrawal from courses
	8-12		Registration for Fall classes
	15	Monday	Patriots' Day - NO CLASSES
	16	Tuesday	CTL Professional Development Program
	18	Thursday	Undergraduate Research Conference; Honors Convocation (NO DAY CLASSES)
May	9	Thursday	FINAL DAY OF CLASSES
	10,13-16		Final Examinations
	16	Thursday	Graduate Commencement 6:30 p.m.; Residence halls close
	18	Saturday	Undergraduate Commencement 10:00 a.m.; Residence halls close for Graduating Seniors
	21	Tuesday	Development Day for Faculty

March 28, 2018

Cover Sheet

News Articles

Section: VI. President's Report
Item: G. News Articles
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: Clips for April 2018.pdf

UNDER CONSTRUCTION: NEW LIFE



Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito joins Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus, left, and Mayor Stephen DiNatale on a tour of the Fitchburg Theater Block project Thursday.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE / JOHN LOVE

Polito cheers university-government partnership at Fitchburg Theater Block

By Elizabeth Dobbins
edobbins@sentinelandenterprise.com

FITCHBURG — If local officials are hoping for state help renovating the Fitchburg Theater Block, they got some encouraging signs during Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito's visit to the Main Street project Thursday afternoon.

"This is a public-public-public partnership with the state and local government

coming together and the university, which is a real engine for economic opportunity," Polito said. "What I love about this is ... it looks pretty beat up right now, but the opportunity and potential for it is great."

Polito is the second member of the Baker administration to make an appearance at the project since Fitchburg State University announced the purchase of the building

across from old City Hall in fall 2016. In January, Jay Ash, state secretary of housing and economic development, visited during a reception for the first phase of the renovation — a computer lab for game design students and an entrepreneurship center.

Construction on the first phase will com-

Please see **THEATER/6**

Polito applauds Fitchburg Theater Block vision

THEATER/From Page 1

plete this spring, according to university estimates. Over the next four or five years, Fitchburg State plans to lead two subsequent two phases: the renovation of commercial bays on the first floor and redoing the one-time movie theater.

“It looks pretty beat up right now, but the opportunity and potential for it is great.”

Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito

ing, but full-funding for the multi-million project will likely come from both public and private sources.

During the tour Thursday, Lapidus and Mayor Stephen DiNatale described to Polito the theater’s role in the revitalization of the city, which includes simultaneous renovation projects to bring the vacant City Hall

“We’re starting to lay out ground-work for financing now,” Fitchburg State President Richard Lapidus said.

Officials say the university plans to apply for state fund-



Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito speaks with Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus, right, and Mayor Stephen DiNatale by project plans during a visit to the Fitchburg Theater Block. Below, they join local leaders on the tour. SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE PHOTOS / JOHN LOVE

back to its municipal use and install artist housing at B.F. Brown School.

“We’re anticipating an explo-

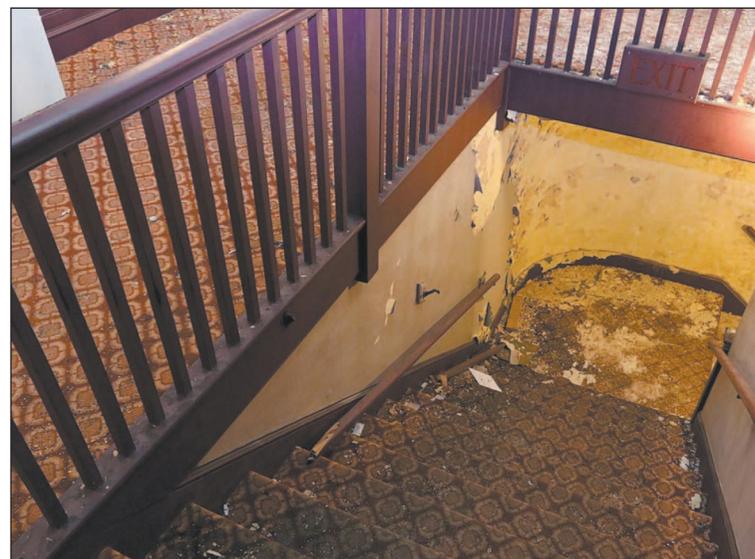
sion here,” DiNatale said.

They group walked through the first phase, which is still under construction, and into the theater, where work has not yet begun. Despite the peeling paint and damp air, officials expressed hope for the structure and its potential to make Fitchburg more attractive to students, who would want to stay in the area long after graduation.

“We see this program as being transformative,” said Lapidus. “I try not to use that word very often. I think it’s overused, but I think in this case it’s fitting. When I came here I saw great potential in the university, the students, the faculty.”

Polito closed her half-hour visit with hopeful words.

“This is a team effort and I’m really nappy I could be here



A long-neglected staircase in a section of the building.

today to see it and figure out with you how we can share resources and develop this pro-

gram even further,” she said.

Follow Elizabeth Dobbins on Twitter @DobbinsSentinel. 32 of 63

Local News

THE SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE, FITCHBURG, MASSACHUSETTS

FRIDAY, MARCH 2, 2018

PAGE 3



Fitchburg State University nursing students serve food at the Spanish American Center's soup kitchen Wednesday. From left facing the camera are Camilla Perlas De Leon, Taylor-Lynn Brown, Sydnee Gallant and Rachel Bordier. The worker at left is unidentified.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE / ELIZABETH DOBBINS

FSU, city formalize partnerships

Community Service Group connects profs, leaders to projects

By Elizabeth Dobbins
edobbins@sentinel
andenterprise.com

FITCHBURG — It's organized art exhibits, created marketing plans, and mapped out areas with high risk for lead poisoning.

Now the Crocker Center for Civic Engagement is giving these one-off partnerships between the community and Fitchburg State University an organized structure: the Community Scholarship Group.

"(We're) introducing the community to the abilities of faculty and trying to meet community needs," said David Weiss, director of the Crocker Center for Civic Engagement, during an announcement Wednesday at Montachusett Opportunity Council.

The program connects community leaders to Fitchburg State professors to work on real-world projects.

However, many professors and organizers in the



Alberto Cardelle, Fitchburg State University provost and vice president for academic affairs, describes the new initiative promoting collaboration between the college and community.

room said this has been going on for years. The group just formalizes it.

Jane Huang, professor of Earth and Geographic Sciences, described taking students to downtown Fitchburg to survey and rate the condition of homes in the North of Main neighborhood.

Marc Dohan, executive director of NewVue Communities, said the project created high quality data his organization can use in revitalization efforts, as well as guidelines that will allow others to continue what they

"She's done a lot of stuff for North of Main and it's been great," Dohan said.

In an effort with similar goals, Professor of Business Administration Mike Greenwood led students in the creation of a marketing plan for the city of Fitchburg.

The thick report was completed in fall 2017 and will be used to help create the city's Economic Development Strategic Plan, according to Tom Skwierawski, the city's executive director of Community

Tricia Pistone, ReImagine North of Main project director, said she hopes an ongoing collaboration surveying student about what they feel would make Fitchburg a "university town" will provide additional insight.

For Christina Gonzales — the activities, volunteer and food pantry coordinator at the Spanish American Center — the most recent collaboration was only hours earlier.

Several Fitchburg State nursing students served food at the soup kitchen at the Spanish American Center, which they plan to continue to do leading up to a community health fair the students are conducting this spring.

"It goes beyond just the food," she said. "You build the trust with the clientele before they're saying 'What's your blood pressure?'"

Gonzales, like others at the Wednesday announcement, anticipates working with the college on more projects in the future.

"Right now we're going through our strategic plan and they mentioned a few other opportunities," she said.

MARCH 19, 2018

FOCUS ON MEETINGS GUIDE AND GOLF DIRECTORY

Fitchburg State remaking theater as new community, incubator space



COURTESY/FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Fitchburg State University renderings (top, bottom and right) show the Theater Block building on the right, which sits across Main Street from City Hall, which is vacant but is slated for a \$23.5-million renovation.



Enlarge image

COURTESY/FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

BY GRANT WELKER

For more than three decades, a theater on Fitchburg's Main Street has sat vacant as a lost opportunity to help revitalize a stretch of downtown seeming too much like a ghost town.

Now, Fitchburg State University is taking on an ambitious project at the Theater Block, to in the short term, bring new educational and entrepreneurship space to the sprawling building,

and later, new storefronts.

The final piece will bring life back to a 1,700-seat theater to house productions for the school and community groups.

Richard Lapidus took on the redevelopment after becoming Fitchburg State president in 2015 and hearing from those at the university who wanted to see the school

focus more on entrepreneurship and a more interdisciplinary approach.

"We had also talked with trustees about the university being a good steward in its home city," Lapidus said of the mission.

With that, Fitchburg State bought the dilapidated building the following year for \$350,000.

A shared community space

Just about a mile from campus, the development will be Fitchburg State's first presence of its kind in downtown Fitchburg. A 7,000-square-foot second-floor space is due to be complete at the end of the spring semester to include space for the university's video game design program – the only such public-university program in the state – and entrepreneurship programs.

"Part of the effort is to convene groups of people," Lapidus said. "The university, I think, naturally has that role anyway, and now we have an opportunity to do that in a different location with a new audience."

The \$2-million first phase is meant to bring in the community into a shared open-floor workspace typically existing only in larger cities. University and city



Enlarge image

COURTESY/FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus (center) describes the Theater Block project in January to Fitchburg Mayor Stephen DiNatale (left) and Massachusetts Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Jay Ash (right).



COURTESY/FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

officials see the lab as a potential draw for a stretch of Fitchburg with relatively few workers today.

"It's very exciting stuff," Fitchburg Mayor Stephen DiNatale said. "We're anticipating that that whole area is going to explode with interest."

NewVue Communities, a Fitchburg nonprofit that assists businesses and owns affordable housing, is a partner in the entrepreneurship lab and plans to offer programming there. Marc Dohan, NewVue's executive director, said teaming with Fitchburg State was the only way to make such an effort possible.

"It's a great opportunity, and it's something that neither of us could quite do on our own," Dohan said, adding that he sees such a center offering a critical boost to those looking to start their own business.

"You're not just renting, and you're not just part of culture," he said. "You're actually learning to do things."

Creating a new downtown

The Theater Block development is set to come together with two other neighboring projects, giving officials hope for more vitality downtown.

NewVue Communities is planning renovation of the vacant former B.F. Brown School just a block away on Academy Street to become 50 to 60 residential units. The project, which still requires permitting and financing, will be aimed at housing for artists.

City Hall sits directly across Main Street from the Theater Block but has been closed since 2012 when a support truss in the roof was deemed a structural hazard. It is slated to be redeveloped in a \$23.5-million project.

City Hall workers were relocated to a former manufacturing building a few blocks away on Boulder Drive. That's left two key buildings directly across Main Street from one another empty.

Fitchburg city councilors approved the renovation project last month, with the city also taking over an adjacent former Bank of America branch for offices.

"I want to get into City Hall as soon as we can," DiNatale said. "We're kind of bursting at the seams over here. It's not an appropriate city hall."

The return of city workers to upper Main Street should happen around the time when six retail spaces in the Theater Block become available. The university doesn't yet have firm ideas for how the spaces may be used, but officials have talked about restaurants or uses that complement the lab space upstairs, Lapidus said.

"That's another component of economic development, if we can provide that kind of space," DiNatale said of the affect the incubator space should have. "Born out of those ideas are commerce and jobs, and that's what we need."

Eventually, the Theater Block is set to include a renovation of the theater itself, a 28,000-square-foot space in the rear of the building that hasn't been used in decades. The university has hired an architect and consultants to help plan for that space, and Lapidus said the school hopes a reborn theater can help the performing arts community in North Central Massachusetts.

Costs and a timetable for the theater renovation aren't yet in place.



Fitchburg State University's plans for the downtown theater block are on display during a tour of the renovation project underway at the complex Wednesday. [PHOTOS/JIM MARABELLO]

Theater block renovations lauded in Fitchburg tour

By Paula J. Owen
Correspondent

FITCHBURG – Renovations to the theater block, a blighted Main Street complex that will house learning space for Fitchburg State University, are expected to near completion by summer.

State and local officials were briefed on the building's future during a tour Wednesday, when the multimillion-dollar renovation project was touted as a boon to the city's downtown. Jay Ash, state secretary of housing and economic development, was among the participants.

The theater block, 717 Main St., was vacant for nearly 30 years before Fitchburg State purchased it in November 2016 for \$350,000.

The first phase of renovations, a \$2.8 million project begun last fall, involves 7,000 square feet on the second floor. An ideaLab is planned, with a computer lab and entrepreneurship space, and space for meetings and other events. Ultimately, the 25,000-square-foot theater will be restored as well.



Fitchburg State University is rehabilitating the theater block at 717 Main St., Fitchburg.

large.

Mr. Ash said Fitchburg's passion is what makes it "so special" and what will make it successful in its rebirth.

"What Fitchburg State is creating is remarkable," Mr. Ash said. "We want to help you create what is a transformative project in the downtown."

Mayor Stephen L. DiNatale said the project aligns with his administration's mission to fill vacancies and

zation and the university and will be a great place for Fitchburg residents, FSU students and alumni to learn from each other and help spur Fitchburg's creative economy.

"It's taking people who have a dream and helping them realize it," Mr. Dohan said.

"You (FSU) looked at this building and you took a chance on it. It makes a dif-

ferent story. It's not just student-led businesses and new restaurant and retail space. In 2020-2022, the theater will be restored for the university's theater program and possible use by community organizations.

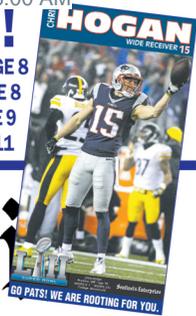
"I do think we have something special going on here," FSU President Richard S. Lapidus said. "The university has done its part in contributing to the betterment of the city, and we're going to continue doing that."

FBI CLASH WITH TRUMP
'GRAVE CONCERNS' ON RUSSIA MEMO NATION — PAGE 13



DAYS AWAY!

- HELP FOR GRID GREENHORNS — PAGE 8
- SUPER BOWL ADS TO CATCH — PAGE 8
- PATRIOTS-EAGLES MATCHUPS — PAGE 9
- POSTER OF CHRIS HOGAN — PAGE 11



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Jay Ash, state secretary of housing and economic development, left, takes a selfie with FSU President Richard Lapidus and At-Large City Councilor Sam Squailia during a tour Wednesday of the renovations underway at the Theater Block downtown. **See video and slide show at sentinelandenterprise.com.**

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE / JOHN LOVE

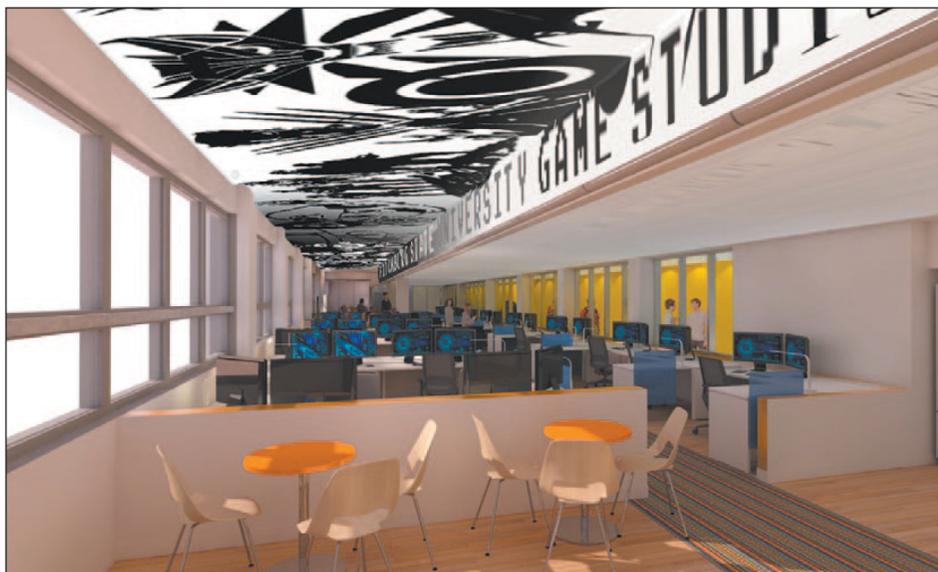
Amid bare studs, a city vision

Theater Block tour shows work toward new life under FSU

By Elizabeth Dobbins
edobbins@sentinelandenterprise.com

FITCHBURG — There's still work to be done, but the first phase of the Theater Block renovation downtown is well underway, said Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus.

He showed the roughly 6,000-square-foot space, which was stripped to the studs during construction work that started this fall, during a tour of the site with



An artist's rendering of how the FSU game lab will appear once construction is complete. **Powered by BoardOnTrack**

Please see **THEATER/5**

IMAGE COURTE38 of 63

Seeds of a new life at Theater Block

THEATER/From Page 1

local and state officials Wednesday.

“The university has a responsibility (to bring people together) and we do that well,” he said. “The space will allow us to extend that.”

Jay Bry, FSU’s vice president of finance and administration, said the second-floor space that faces Main Street is expected to be completed in April with the Idea Center, a space for entrepreneurship, projected to see use starting this summer. The remainder of the upstairs will be used as a computer lab for students enrolled in the university’s game design program.

The \$2.8 million project, funded by the university’s operational funds, represents the first step toward renovating the Theater Block, which, aside from a handful of storefronts, has

remained largely empty since the 1980s.

Fitchburg State University purchased the Theater Block in November 2016 and announced a three-phase plan to bring students and foot traffic

downtown.

The Idea Center will provide support and planning for both students and community members interested in entrepreneurship, according to school officials. Lapidus said the center will set itself apart by offer-

ing both the expertise of the university faculty and a local knowledge of the area.

Marc Dohan, executive director of NewVue Communities, said the center will also be staffed by people from his agency, which offers assistance to prospective business owners in the region.

“If somebody comes in they’ll not only have a space, but they’ll also have that

The game design lab will feature a ceiling mural visible to people walking on Main Street.



Fitchburg Mayor Stephen DiNatale speaks to the crowd during a tour of the renovations at the Theater Block downtown Wednesday morning. “There’s going to be an extraordinary amount of foot traffic here,” he said. “We’re focusing on the goal of increasing interest in downtown. Bringing it back.”

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE / JOHN LOVE

training, that guidance, that perspective,” he said.

The game design lab will feature a ceiling mural visible to people walking on Main Street.

The second phase calls for the renovation of the building’s seven first-floor bays, some which are currently occupied. Lapidus said he is unsure what form this renovation will take, but proposed three approaches: building out

the spaces for traditional businesses, using the space for businesses “germinated” upstairs or installing student-run businesses.

Finally, the university plans to renovate the 28,235-square-foot theater space, which could seat 1,751 patrons.

Bry said the start dates of these projects depend on funding, which the university is working to secure. However, he expects all three phases to be complete in about four years.

The first phase of the renovation was initially set to open at the start of the 2017-18 school year, but the school had to “rework some of our contracts,” according to Lapidus, who did not offer complete details.

The renovation coincides with the city’s proposal to renovate the vacant City Hall, which is across the street. The City Council will take its final vote to approve funding for this project on Tuesday, though previous votes on the issue had near-unani-

mous support.

“There’s going to be an extraordinary amount of foot traffic here,” said Mayor Stephen DiNatale. “We’re focusing on the goal of increasing interest in downtown. Bringing it back.”

Jay Ash, state secretary of housing and economic development who attended

the event, praised the collaboration between different groups in the city in support of this project.

“The themes that you’ve heard today are the themes that I hope for other communities to have on a regular basis,” he said.

Follow Elizabeth Dobbins on Twitter @DobbinsSentinel.



An architectural rendering shows a vibrant scene along Main Street outside a Theater Block revitalized by Fitchburg State.

IMAGE COURTESY OF FSU

Powered by BoardOnTrack



NewVue Communities Executive Director Marc Dohan talks about the Theater Block plans as FSU President Richard Lapidus looks on. The Idea Center, a space for entrepreneurship, will be staffed by people from his agency.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE / JOHN LOVE



Brandon Harsh, of Ashby, holds his daughter, Eva, after his unit, the 181st Infantry Regiment, Massachusetts Army National Guard, returned to Fitchburg on Saturday from a deployment to Africa as part of Task Force Sinai. [PHOTOS/JIM MARABELLO]

Present arms

Tears, smiles greet local Army National Guard troops returning from Egypt

By Paula J. Owen
Correspondent

FITCHBURG – They returned from two distinct missions in Sinai, Egypt – one platoon protecting the South Camp and hundreds of personnel from 12 different

nations, the other manning three remote observation posts responsible for reporting potential violations of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel.

No matter what the mission, the commanding officers of the 200 troops deployed to Egypt in May serving in the 181st Infantry Regiment, Massachusetts Army National Guard, said the soldiers

See **TROOPS**, p. 2
Powered by BoardOnTrack



1st Lt. Nathan Wright, of Southbridge, greets his father, Ron, after his deployment to Africa.

TROOPS

From Page B1

were repeatedly recognized for their outstanding service, setting the standard for all other units to emulate.

On Saturday afternoon, they were welcomed home and given a standing ovation by friends, family and state and local officials during an emotional ceremony in the Weston Auditorium at Fitchburg State University. The ceremony marked their return after a nine-month deployment to Africa as part of Task Force Sinai in support of the multinational force and observers mission to assist with joint security efforts. Though the soldiers remarked when they arrived that Egypt looked just like Texas where they trained from March to May, the temperature reached 105 degrees eight out of the nine months they were there and the culture in Egypt was much different, Capt. Jonathan P. Showalter said during the ceremony.

It was the sixth deployment to Egypt for the regiment since 9/11, he said.

The troops marched on stage in the auditorium as screams and cheers filled the room. Commanding officers Capt. Showalter and 1st Lt. Anthony R. LeFleur said the soldiers were an honor to serve with and an inspiration.

"There are thousands of reasons to be proud of these men and thankful for their service to their country," Lt. LeFleur said.

After leaving the stage, they had one more duty to fulfill – grabbing their bags from the buses that delivered them before reuniting with their loved ones who left the auditorium to wait outside. As they emerged with their green Army bags, there were screams of elation and tears of joy as each soldier was surrounded and embraced by their spouses and children, parents, siblings, friends and family.

Similar ceremonies welcoming home the soldiers of the 181st Regiment were held Saturday at the National Guard Armory in Worcester and at Agawam High



James Charbonneau, of the 181st Infantry Regiment, Massachusetts Army National Guard, holds his daughter, Nova, after his return from a deployment to Africa as part of Task Force Sinai. His wife, Maryssa, is at left. They reside in Athol. [PHOTO/JIM MARABELLO]

School.

Jacques A. and Gail W. van Schouwen of Northbridge, eagerly awaited reuniting with their son Josh R. van Schouwen, 29, who joined the military in 2009.

"I'm relieved and happy," said Ms. van Schouwen, who frequently chatted and Facetimed with her son during his deployment.

"I was nervous about him going to Egypt, but he told us, 'It shouldn't be too bad.' He was looking forward to it."

His father said he was glad to have him home and that the couple was planning to "fire up the grill" and make his son's favorite foods that he requested – barbecue chicken, macaroni salad and pineapple upside-down cake.

"You always get a little worried in the back of your mind," Mr. van Schouwen said. "We got a whole soiree planned when we get home," that included seeing his two nephews born just before he left.

It was Staff Sgt. Evan J. Parker's third deployment after Iraq in 2009-2010 and Afghanistan in 2011-2012. He said he was planning on taking a few days off and going right back to work.

"It is good to be home," said Mr. Parker, who lives in Holden. "Our guys worked extremely hard and it paid off."

The oldest of six children (three boys), Mr. Parker was reuniting with his parents and

siblings and going out to eat.

"This is old hat to them," he said. "They are more excited to see my brother-in-law (Seth Anderholm, 24) who came back with me."

Mr. Parker explained that he and Mr. Anderholm – who is married to his second-youngest sister Lynnea Anderholm, 23 – grew up together, attending the same church. It was Mr. Anderholm's second deployment having gone to Afghanistan in 2012-2013, he said. He volunteered to go with Mr. Parker to Africa.

"I kept him as close as I could," Mr. Parker said. "He was one of my team leaders. We (the U.S.) have been doing this mission for more than 30 years and we're accustomed to an austere environment. It was no cakewalk, but it wasn't what Afghanistan

or Iraq were. It was no different than some cities in the states and was relatively quiet."

Sgt. Brandon R. Harsh, 28, of Ashby was welcomed home by his wife, Collen A. Harsh, a registered nurse, daughter Eva, 2, his infant son, 14 months, and other family and friends.

It was his second deployment after Afghanistan is 2010-2011.

"I am excited and grateful to be back and finally get to enjoy time with family," Mr. Harsh said, who held tears back when he saw his children. "Being deployed was exciting and we received a lot of training and saw a lot of places you typically wouldn't see. It was a good experience, but I'm looking forward to the next few days."

Ms. Harsh said the reunion with her husband was emotional, but exciting.

"I tried not to cry," she said.

She said she started telling her daughter about three weeks ago that her father was coming home.

"She would ask me every day, 'Daddy home?' " she said. "I would tell her, 'Soon.' "

Mr. Harsh said he and his wife would take turns cooking each night, something he really missed in Egypt where the food was "challenging," he said. He said he also missed sitting with his wife by the fireplace.

"You need patience and to stay positive," he said of managing time away from family during deployment. "And, keeping the supports of friends and family. When we're gone, that's all they have."



Army National Guard Sgt. Brandon Harsh from Ashby is thankful to be home to his wife, Colleen, and daughter, Eva, 2, following a ceremony Saturday in Fitchburg.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE/JOHN LOVE

Soldiers return home to hero's welcome

By **Julia Sarcinelli**
Correspondent

FITCHBURG — About 65 soldiers from Bravo Company of the 1-181st Infantry Regiment Army National Guard returned home after a year-long deployment overseas to the cheers and tears of their family and friends on Saturday.

Around 100 people packed Weston

Auditorium at Fitchburg State to welcome the returning soldiers, holding posters and American flag balloons. They were deployed to Egypt as part of Task Force Sinai in support of the Multinational Force and Observers Mission to assist with joint security efforts.

“I want you to understand you are a part of it. Powered by BoardOnTrack a bet-

ter place because of it,” said Capt. Jonathan Showalter, Bravo Company 1-181st Infantry out of Gardner, to the troops after they walked on the stage to cheers and camera flashes.

The regiment has around 200 soldiers in units from Agawam, Fitchburg and Worcester.

Please see **SOLDIERS/4**

Tears, cheers and hugs — soldiers return to welcome suited for heroes

SOLDIERS/From Page 1

“The most important thing is there are thousands of reasons to be proud of these men and be thankful for their service to their country,” said Showalter, receiving a stand-

ing ovation of agreement from the audience.

The soldiers left the auditorium and grabbed their bags, quickly dropping them on the ground to embrace their loved ones for the first time in a year before heading

home.

Colleen Harsh, of Ashby, waited with family and friends to welcome home her husband, Sgt. Brandon Harsh, who has served for 11 years. Harsh said he is glad to be able to spend time with his family, including his daughter Eva, 2, and son Lucas, 1.

“He’s grown two times the size he was the last time I saw him,” said Harsh with a laugh as he held his son, who was around 8 weeks old when he left.

“It was very hot, but a very interesting country,” said Harsh of Egypt. “We still made the best of it and had a lot of good training.”

Colleen Harsh is also part of the Family Readiness Program, which acts as a support chain between the soldiers and their families, helping with any issues families back home may have while also organizing programs and functions.

Silvane DePaula, of Leominster, cried in joy as she reunited with her son, 23 year-old Specialist Rondinelle DePaula, who is also a criminal justice student at Fitchburg State University.

Of what she looks forward to most to doing with her son, DePaula said she just wants to give him “all the love.”



Specialist Rondinelle DePaula of Leominster greets his girlfriend, Paige Aube, also from Leominster, after the ceremony. They have been dating for two and a half years. Below, DePaula receives a hug from his friend, Khanaro Kien.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE/JOHN LOVE



LOCAL



Fitchburg State University will have a ribbon cutting Tuesday at the newly renovated Carmelita Landry Arena.
[T&G STAFF/CHRISTINE PETERSON]

Renovated Landry Arena to open in Fitchburg

By Paula J. Owen
Correspondent

FITCHBURG – The newly renovated Landry Arena at the Wallace Civic Center will serve Fitchburg State University and also house the city Parks and Recreation Department, which was once at odds with the university over the facility.

FSU President Richard S. Lapidus, Mayor Stephen L. DiNatale and others are

scheduled to speak at a brief ribbon-cutting ceremony at 10 a.m. Tuesday at the renovated arena, 1000 John Fitch Highway. Renovations totaled \$3.5 million.

The former ice rink next to the Gaetz Arena ice surface has been replaced by a strength and conditioning center and a small practice field that will be used by varsity athletes, according to FSU spokesman Matthew J. Bruun, as well as students in

the new strength and conditioning concentration within the Exercise and Sports Science program the school expects to launch this fall.

The turf field inside Landry Arena will be available to the public when not in use by the university, Mr. Bruun said, via the Parks and Recreation Department, whose offices will be housed at Landry pending

See LANDRY, A4

LANDRY

From Page A3

the renovation of Fitchburg City Hall.

“We are proud to honor the legacy of Carmelita Landry with this renovated facility that will help students and athletes perform at the highest levels,” Mr. Lapidus said. “We are also committed to working closely with the city on projects that benefit our shared community. Through our combined efforts, the Civic Center will remain a viable and important asset to the entire region for years to come.”

Nathan J. LaRose, the city’s recreation director, said his department is excited about moving into new office space at the “beautiful” facility in the spring.

“A lot of work has been done and we’re happy to have a new home with FSU,” Mr. LaRose said.

Once renovations of the historic City Hall building are complete, Mr. LaRose said, the Recreation Department will move to offices there.

The Landry Arena was built in the early 1970s as part of the civic center and was named in honor of national speedskating champion Carmelita Landry, one of the most decorated athletes in Fitchburg’s history. The city would later transfer control of the property to the university, and the state



Alex Lhomme of Griffin Electric walks alongside the turf in the cross training room in the newly

signed a 99-year lease on behalf of FSU for \$1 to assume operations of the Wallace Civic Center in 2007. FSU spent \$3.1 million renovating it and the Gaetz Arena.

In 2014, FSU announced plans to convert the aging Landry Arena into a year-round recreational facility – without ice. At the time, FSU said the nearly 50-year-old arena that had operated at a deficit for years as an ice surface was in need of significant capital investments. Converting it into an all-season recreational facility and maximizing use of the space

Arena - located inside the Civic Center itself along with banquet and meeting rooms and a planetarium - would preserve the long-term viability of the entire complex, college officials said.

But over the years it had become unclear who actually controlled the facility, and a dispute erupted between FSU, city leaders and area groups that used the arena.

On March 1, 2015, FSU started demolishing the rink, the day before the City Council voted to go to court for a ruling on who actually controlled the Landry Arena.

The city was prepared to go to court to seek a halt to the demolition until a judge could rule on the matter. But the question was resolved out of court.

“The city owns the property and has a lease agreement with Fitchburg State,” Mr. LaRose said. “Over the last several years, the lease was reviewed and updated and approved by the state. It cleared up the issue of who owns the property and (affirms) that Fitchburg State has rights.”

Mr. Bruun said the revised lease agreement was finalized in December 2015.



Renovations to the Carmelita Landry Arena at the Wallace Civic Center at Fitchburg State University are now complete. Darlene Westlund, the daughter of Carmelita Landry, attended the ribbon-cutting.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE/JOHN LOVE

Renovation produces smiles

Ice gone at Landry Arena, but Fitchburg State facility upgraded

By Elizabeth Dobbins
edobbins@sentinel
andenterprise.com

FITCHBURG — Only the parking lot was icy at the reopening of the Carmelita Landry Arena on Tuesday.

Two and a half years after Fitchburg State University removed the ice rink in the complex at the Wallace Civic Center, officials and students gathered to see the renovated interior, which

includes a new indoor field, strength and conditioning center and office space for the city's Parks and Recreation Department.

Fitchburg State University President Richard S.

Lapidus said the \$3.5 million project, funded by a bond from the Massachusetts State College Building Authority, has multiple goals.

"The renovated Landry Arena will help generations of student-athletes to compete at the highest level. It will also provide hands-on experience for students to learn how to facilitate such excellence and serve as a laboratory for expanding academic programs," he said.

"At the same time the university is committed to further strengthening our collaboration with our host city by feeding opportunities for the broader community to benefit from the facility."

The facility primarily will be used by the university's 330 varsity athletes, but during the off-season others can book the space. School officials say the new addition also will free availability in the Recreation Center for the



Fitchburg State students check out renovations to the Carmelita Landry Arena on Tuesday.



Renovations to the Carmelita Landry Arena at the Wallace Civic Center at Fitchburg State University are now complete, and there was a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Tuesday. Landry Arena will house a new strength and conditioning center for university athletes, along with a practice field that will be open to the community during the athletic off-season.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE/JOHN LOVE

Renovation leads to big smiles at Fitchburg State University

LANDRY/From Page 1

use of students not enrolled in athletics as well as some general community access.

Fitchburg State seniors Carrie Long and Lia Crutchfield toured the center on Tuesday, days before their first lacrosse practice on the new 55-yard by 25-yard turf field. They said they used to practice in the Recreation Center gym, a very different surface from the fields where they play games.

“I’ve been waiting for this since my freshman year,” Crutchfield said.

The room next door is equipped with weight benches, a padded wall for tossing medicine balls and a

strip of turf. It will serve as a place for athletes to train and an area to implement the new strength and conditioning concentration, part of the Exercise and Sports Science Department set to launch next fall.

City officials say the two-room office near the entrance of the building will house the Parks and Recreation Department until City Hall, if approved, is remodeled.

The city owns the arena. About a decade ago it agreed to lease the building to the university at \$1 for 99 years.

In 2014, the university closed the building amid controversy and later removed the ice rink, citing economic reasons. The rink had \$1 million total net deficit and required

\$2.3 million in repairs, according to university officials in 2015.

Though the rink is gone, the arena retained its namesake: Carmelita Landry, a famed Fitchburg speed skater who raced in the 1930s and 1940s.

Landry’s daughter, Darlene Westlund, said her late mother would have loved to the renovation.

“I think it’s wonderful,” said Westlund, who attended the arena’s reopening. “I fought to keep the arena the way that it was and then I realized that the cost of it was astronomical ... but I’m very honored that my mother’s name has still been kept.”

Follow Elizabeth Dobbins on Twitter @DobbinsSentinel



Fitchburg State University senior football player Stephen Armand gets in some exercise at the Carmelita Landry Arena.

Fitchburg State University - Board of Trustees - Agenda - Tuesday April 3, 2018 at 8:00 AM

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Fitchburg State University Police Chief Michael J. Cloutier, holding a blue full plastic training rifle is subdued by, from left, sophomore Kasey Babbitt, 19; junior Ellicen Pena, 21; freshman Tiffany Alban, 19; and sophomore Alli Pecorella, 19, during an active shooter response training class in Hammond Hall on Tuesday. **For a slide show and video from the class, visit sentinelandenterprise.com.**

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE/JOHN LOVE

Preparing for the worst

Fitchburg State teaches students how to react to an active-shooter situation

By Elizabeth Dobbins
edobbins@sentinelandenterprise.com

FITCHBURG — Under normal circumstances, the scene at Hammond Hall Tuesday afternoon would have been unusual.

Four students hung off of Fitchburg State University Police Chief Michael

Cloutier as the law enforcement veteran wielded a solid plastic rifle.

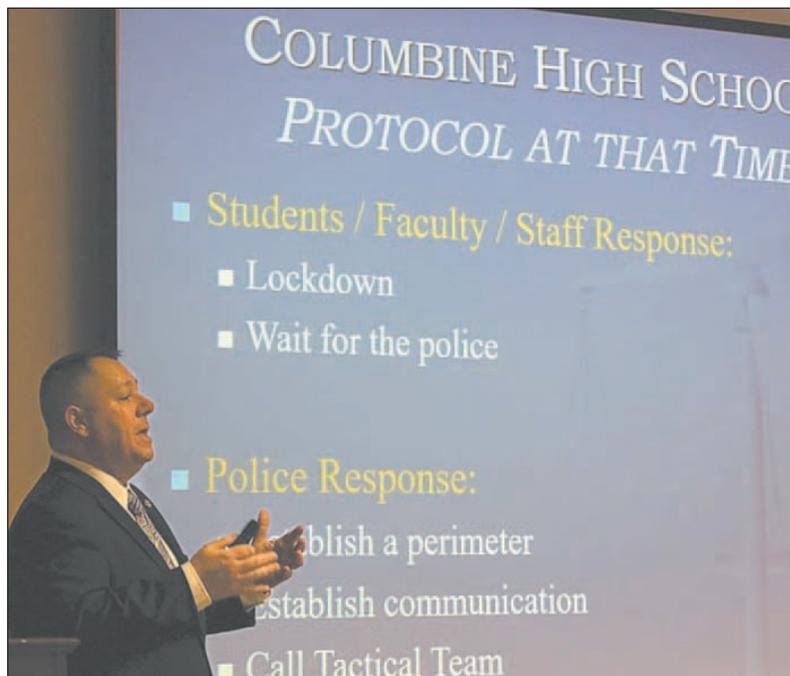
“You can grab a leg, you can grab the gun as well,” he instructed the students. “Whatever you got.”

But the scenario that played out in the auditorium was not a one-off. Since ePowered by BoardOnTrack enacted

it again and again at classes running at least twice a semester, teaching students and members of the public how to respond to an active shooter.

And Fitchburg State isn't alone. These classes are “more of the norm than the anomaly” at college campuses

Please see **FSU/8**



ABOVE: Fitchburg State University Police Chief Michael J. Cloutier speaks during an active shooter response training class held in Hammond Hall on Tuesday afternoon. **RIGHT:** Fitchburg State junior Ellicen Pena, 21, of Lawrence, holds a blue plastic training pistol and pointed it at Chief Cloutier as other students prepare to throw tennis balls at him to show how students could defend themselves if they worked together.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE PHOTOS/JOHN LOVE



Not a typical class at Fitchburg State

FSU/From Page 1

across the nation, he said.

From 2000 to 2013, a study conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation lists 160 active shooter incidents at schools. Of that number, 7-and-a-half percent occurred at places of higher education.

The study shows a steady upward trend — one Cloutier fears will continue when it's updated with numbers from recent years.

But students say these incidents can be easy to forget as they go about their day to day lives until something like last week's shooting at the high school in Parkland, Fla. happens.

"As with other things, it tends to die down. It kind of goes to the back of your mind," said Angela Douthright, a 35-year-old junior studying early education.

However, when it comes to protecting her family and future students, Douthright feels she

"You don't have a one-size fits all plan. You have options."

Fitchburg State University Police Chief Michael Cloutier during Tuesday's class on responding to an active shooter situation

has an obligation.

So does Daimee MacIsaac, the president of the campus Role Playing Guild who attended the class with club treasurer Alli Pecorella.

"In most classroom environments the teacher is the authority of the classroom and they're sort of responsible for knowing what to do. In our club meetings where I'm the president I am that authority," said MacIsaac, a 20-year-old sophomore. "I feel like I had an obligation to my club members to know how to handle that situation."

In all, about 20 people attended the two-hour class where Cloutier described several approaches to an active shooter event.

"You don't have a one-size fits

all plan," he said. "You have options."

Conventional wisdom for how both law enforcement and potential victims approach the situation has changed dramatically in the past 20 years.

Instead of creating a perimeter and negotiating, police now immediately approach and try to stop the shooter, Cloutier said.

During the shooting at Columbine High School in 1999, he said most students were advised to barricade themselves in place. That's still one option, but depending on these often "dynamic" situations it may be more effective to make way to the nearest exit or, as a last resort, take out the shooter.

He recommended keeping hands visible for police and leav-

ing possessions, even phones, behind when escaping. Once in a safe place, call 911 if a phone is nearby.

If directly confronted with a shooter make noise, throw objects and collaborate with others.

"Seconds," Cloutier said. "That's all it takes. That's all it takes to make a difference."

Unlike many classes of this type, Cloutier also included a section with tips for recognizing signs that someone is planning a mass shooting.

Though people who know the perpetrators often remember signs — such as threats, physical aggression and stalking — after the shooting, these red flags are not always reported.

"Frankly, we don't want to see the bad in people," Cloutier said.

Fitchburg State University has a tip system, CARE Team Report, in place to report concerning behavior as well as a notification system to send alerts to students during an incident.

Cloutier will host the same active shooter response class and a more in-depth class for recognizing changes and potentially violent behaviors next Tuesday. The time and location have not yet been announced.

The course this Tuesday drew mostly new, but also some repeat visitors like 19-year-old sophomore Pecorella who is trying to respond to both the changing recommendations and world.

"I remembered what I learned in high school, but I'm glad I came again because things ... are always changing," she said. "We need to continue adapting."

Follow Elizabeth Dobbins on Twitter @DobbinsSentinel

Fitchburg State grad being honored with national student affairs award

Contributed Report

FITCHBURG — Brandon Brideau '16, '18 will represent Fitchburg State at the NASPA National Conference in Philadelphia this March when he receives the NASAPA NOW Professional Award.

The new award is being offered by the leading association for the advancement, health and sustainability of the student affairs profession.

For Brideau, working in student affairs was an unexpected detour. As a high school senior, the Leominster native was looking for schools within commuting distance of his home, and he was familiar with the Fitchburg State campus from competing in the high school track meets at Elliot Field. He also liked what he saw of the Mathematics Department, which was his anticipated course of study.

After spending time as a commuter student, Brideau sought a residential experience. So he applied to become a resident assistant — or RA — where his housing costs would be covered. He got a lot more than a roof over his head from the experience, developing problem-solving skills and the ability to respond to potential crises. “When you become an RA, you see the world differently,” Brideau said.

He competed as a student-athlete all four years of his undergraduate program in mathematics, and decided to stick with Fitchburg State in pursuit of his Master of Business Administration with a concentration in accounting (he will graduate in May). He also kept involved with Student Affairs, becoming a resident director — or RD — at Simonds

Hall on North Street.

The 150-bed, suite-style residential facility was developed as private housing, but was purchased in 2017 by the Massachusetts State College Building Authority (MSCBA). As the RD at Simonds, Brideau was called upon to play a central role in the acquisition process. From taking inventory of assets like furniture to communicating with tenants about transition plans, there was a lot of work to do in a short period of time, according to Fitchburg State Housing and Residential Life Director Kristin Murphy. The state officials working on the project had high praise for Brideau’s performance, lobbying to have his university employment agreement extended into the summer months so he could continue his high level of performance.

“One thing that sets Brandon apart is his exceptionally high level of integrity,” Murphy said in nominating Brideau for the NASPA award. “It is apparent to all who interact with him as he communicates honestly and authentically at all times. So many people have responded positively to his work ethic, his professionalism and the outstanding results that he produces in relation to any task he is given, no matter how big or small. As a department head, I am constantly complimented on his work and demeanor by others.”

Brideau will attend the NASPA national conference in March where he will be recognized in person as well as on the organization’s website.

“I’ve gained so much from my college career,” Brideau said. “These six years have flown by.”



Fitchburg State University graduate Brandon Brideau heads to Philadelphia in March to receive the NASPA NOW Professional Award for his work as a resident assistant at FSU.

Climate topic of book by FSU profs

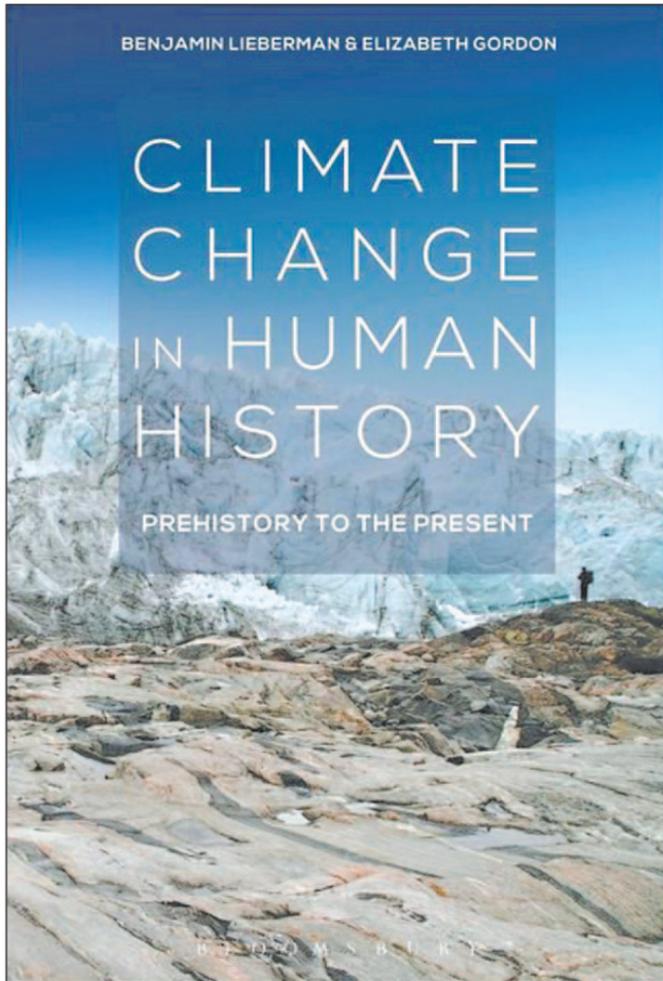
FITCHBURG — Fitchburg State University professors Ben Lieberman and Elizabeth Gordon have co-authored a new book about the relationship between human beings and global climate.

“Climate Change in Human History” is being published this month by Bloomsbury Academic, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing.

“The book arose out of a team-taught class that brought together our fields of geophysical science and history to focus on a topic of extreme importance,” said Lieberman, who teaches economics, history and political science. “It is invaluable, in my opinion, for Fitchburg State students to have the chance to take these kinds of interdisciplinary courses.”

Gordon agreed. “It not only covers an important topic in the geosciences, but it teaches students how to integrate the methods and evidence from different disciplines to address a critical issue,” said the professor of Earth and geographic sciences.

The course was first taught in 2012, but both professors were dissatis-



fied with the available textbooks on the subject.

“Climate research is ever-expanding, and historians have established environmental history as a major field, but we found that the books available to provide an overall guide for students were lacking for a variety of reasons,” Lieberman said.

So they decided to write one of their own. The new book took shape as sabbatical projects for both professors in 2015 and 2016.

The finished volume provides an up-to-date and concise introduction to the relationship between human beings and climate change throughout history.

Spanning hundreds of thousands of years, it illus-

trates how natural climate variability affected early human societies, and how humans are now able to alter climate drastically within much shorter spans of time. The book explains how climate change has created opportunities, as well as risks and challenges, for human societies over the centuries. It concludes by outlining the key human role in bringing about accelerating climate change.

Gordon and Lieberman’s co-taught class on climate change and human history will next be offered in the fall.

For more on their book, visit www.bloomsbury.com/us/climate-change-in-human-history or call 9781472598523.

Photographer and multimedia artist to highlight FSU Series

FITCHBURG — Fitchburg State University's Communications Media Lecture Series this spring features celebrated photographer Roger Farrington and world-renowned multimedia artist Xu Bing.

The spring series begins Tuesday, Feb. 13, at 3:30 p.m., in Ellis White Lecture Hall in Hammond Hall, with Farrington, a Boston-based commercial and public-relations photographer who will talk about his 25 years of experience in the business of theater and celebrity events photography.

From his beginnings in Boston theater, he built a successful business photographing for theater and events, both celebrity and corporate. His clients have included the Charles Playhouse, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Wang Center, Boston Public Library, MGH Partners Health Care and many more.

He will discuss his experiences being commissioned by Yoko Ono to photograph the recording sessions for

her and John Lennon's album "Double Fantasy" in 1979. The album would be Lennon's final release. Farrington exhibited those and other early black-and-white images at the Panopticon Gallery in Boston for a show that ran six months.

The series continues Tuesday, March 6, at 3:30 p.m., at Ellis White Lecture Hall, with world-renowned multimedia artist Xu Bing presenting his latest project, an experimental/documentary film "Dragonfly Eyes." A widely heralded artist in China, his work has been exhibited across the U.S. as well. While living in the U.S., he won a MacArthur Genius Grant in 1999 and was vice president of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, where he now teaches.

His calligraphic work, collected by major museums, was recently shown in an exhibit of Chinese art that recently closed at the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

He will screen "Dragonfly Eyes," an 80-minute film he made from surveillance-camera footage from



Roger Farrington



Xu Bing

all over China. He turned the footage into an experimental/documentary film as a scripted "romantic" story between a man and woman who did not know each other. The film has been screened at the New York and Toronto Film Festivals, among major showcases.

Leominster library to host program on impactful women

LEOMINSTER — Leominster Public Library welcomes professor Erin Rehrig from Fitchburg State University, who will moderate a discussion featuring an intergenerational panel of local women who are making an impact in a variety of fields.

The program will be held Thursday, Feb. 15, from 3:30 to 5 p.m., in the



Professor Erin Rehrig

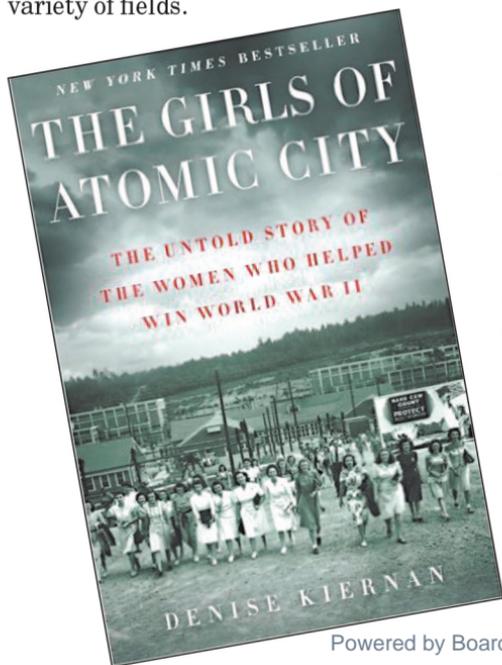
library's Community Room at 30 West St.

The winning essay or video from the library's "Women Making A Difference Essay/Video Contest" for local high-school students will be featured at the panel as well. Each student was asked to write an essay or produce a video about a woman who has profoundly impacted his or her life. Students were free to choose a woman directly involved in their lives or someone whose work or life has influenced them even if they've never met.

The event is open to the public and is free. The snow date is March 1.

The program is one of a series developed in partnership with Fitchburg State and is based on FSU's 2017/2018 Community Read of the book "The Girls of Atomic City: The Untold Story of the Women Who Helped Win World War II" by Denise Kiernan.

For more information, call 978-



Schools get first OK for early college programs

By Scott O'Connell
Telegram & Gazette Staff

Gov. Charlie Baker on Tuesday revealed the first lineup of regional programs, including several in Central Massachusetts, that are part of a new state initiative that aims to help high school students earn college credits before they graduate.

In all, the state has given preliminary approval to 21 "early college programs," which will be able to apply for final designation next month and, with state approval, launch this fall. In addition, several program operators, including Quinsigamond Community College, Worcester State University and the Worcester school system, which together hope to run a program in the city, received a \$10,000 planning grant to develop their offering.

In the region, the state also gave tentative approval to programs that will be overseen by Mount Wachusett Community College and Fitchburg State, which will work with the Fitchburg, Leominster and Gardner school systems and Sizer School; Mount Wachusett and Murdock High School in Winchendon; and Quinsigamond and the Marlboro schools.

"Early college programs are crucial for exposing students to the opportunities higher-education can create and with these designations, more students will be able to earn college credits at no cost," Mr. Baker said in a statement. "We are pleased to work with these school districts to expand or launch early college programs so their students are better prepared for successful academic and professional careers after high school."

Announced as a major initiative by the state a year ago, the early college model is similar to existing dual enrollment programs, which allow students to take college classes and earn college credits while they are still in high school. Compared to dual enrollment, however, early college programs are more focused on establishing specific career and college routes for participating students, higher education officials said.

"I think what we're trying to do with these programs is provide a more deliberate pathway to a college education," said Luis Pedraja, president of Quinsigamond.

QCC's program with Worcester State and the Worcester schools, for instance, will create multiple college-level course offerings designed to steer students into in-demand fields in the regional economy. Their goal is to increase the number of early college enrollment numbers in the city from 200 currently to as many as 3,000 by 2021.

State and local officials hope the new early college initiative will benefit low-income students especially, by allowing them to earn free college credits and lighten their financial

burden later when they begin attending college. Some programs will even let them start their career right after high school graduation with the skills and certifications they earned through the early college program they attended.

Fitchburg State and Mount Wachusett's program, for instance, is the continuation of an existing program at their partner districts that invites freshmen interested in nursing to become a certified nursing assistant by the time they graduate high school. With their preliminary early college designation, the institutions are now developing three other career pathways as well.

"This (program) will take those best practices and expand them, and make it more available to additional students," said Fitchburg State's Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Catherine R. Canney. "The passion of the high schools is something like I've never seen. We're pretty excited."

Mount Wachusett is also developing a more targeted college preparation program with the Winchendon schools, which hope to find a way to retain students who have been leaving to enroll in other nearby districts that already have programs with the college, said Fagan Forhan, its assistant dean of K-12 Partnerships and Civic Engagement. The proposed program is specifically aimed at attracting students who fall somewhere between struggling and advanced — two groups Mount Wachusett already offers early college programming to in other districts.

Other early college programs, like Worcester's, meanwhile, will try to bring in students who are traditionally on the fringe of higher education, if they make it at all. Worcester State, for instance, will use its Latino Education Institute to provide wrap-around services to participating students, whose families often don't know much about navigating college, or how they can afford it, according to the institute's executive director, Mary Jo Marion. The program's intent, she said, is to "show families how it can be done, and why it should be done."

Colleges hope their efforts will improve their own recruitment and retention efforts, which are especially critical now that the number of high school graduates in the state is shrinking. Mr. Pedraja, whose college will also be working on a program with the Marlboro district that will expand offerings at the city high school's existing STEM Early College program, said the initiative also fits the state public higher education system's mission of providing a public service to residents.

"We're a community college — what benefits us is the benefit we're providing to the community," he said. "Beyond that, my hope is students will also be comfortable enough to come to QCC and other state schools (after graduation)."



Fitchburg State University students Helen Muma, left, and Evelyne Mochere read Maya Angelou's poem "Still I Rise" during a panel discussion titled "MLK's Unfinished Business," held Thursday at the college. [T&G STAFF PHOTOS/ASHLEY GREEN]

Panel highlights justice, inequality



Sergio Paez, former superintendent of the Holyoke public schools, speaks during a panel discussion titled "MLK's Unfinished Business," held Thursday at Fitchburg State University.

By Paula J. Owen
Correspondent

FITCHBURG – The main lounge was packed Thursday evening for a discussion on injustice and inequality in honor of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., by a diverse panel that included students, faculty and professionals, many of whom said they experienced injustice in their own lives based on the color of their skin.

Danette V. Day, assistant professor of education and the event's moderator, said the room looked like a "rainbow," referring to the diversity of the audience.

Ms. Day asked the panelists to first identify their own biases and break them down.

After reading part of a 1963 letter
Powered by BoardOnTrack Rev. King that included

the quote, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere ... Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly," Ms. Day asked the panelists what injustices they experienced in their own lives.

Attorney Dolores Thibault-Munoz, 36, who is a former city councilor and native of Chicago, said she sees it every day in her work defending the indigent, the majority people of color.

"Indigent defense is today's civil rights movement," Ms. Thibault-Munoz said. "I am constantly thinking about the rights and human dignity of my clients. The majority of my clients are all the poorest, may likely have substance abuse and mental health problems, and the majority haven't graduated

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JUSTICE

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from high school.”

Ms. Thibault-Munoz, whose parents are immigrants of Mexican and Guatemalan descent, said she can see how access to quality education impacts the people she represents and talks about it with her husband, who works with kids who are at risk of dropping out of high school.

“My clients are those kids who just didn’t make it,” she said. “It is challenging, but rewarding. I am making sure the system and constitution are still working. Me being able to provide for indigent clients only began with one case in the 1960s, (near) the time the civil rights amendment passed. We have unfinished business and I am on the front lines daily of it.”

She quoted part of the decision from the landmark 1960s U.S. Supreme Court case that gave poor criminal defendants free counsel. “There can be no equal justice where the kind of trial a man gets depends on the amount of money he has.”

When answering questions about injustice and equality, the panelists often circled back

to education and the gap that is seen in some children of color before they start kindergarten. Though education is accessible for everyone, the outcome for some minorities is not the same, they said.

Education consultant and former Holyoke public schools superintendent Sergio Paez - who said he purposely sought the superintendent’s position in Holyoke when it was considered the worst of the underperforming schools in the state - said by the time children who are at a disadvantage academically reach third grade, there is not enough time for them to catch up by high school graduation.

Radical change is needed to reduce the gap, Mr. Paez said.

“It takes a whole community, and the commitment needs to be there,” he said. “We cannot ignore the minorities, but we need to have willingness. No miracle is happening between third grade and graduation. We not only need great teachers. We need family, leadership and community involvement ... Racism and inequality exist. Look at the data. Call it a gap or call it outcome.”

Following a question-and-answer segment with the audience, Mr. Day told a reporter it was important that

FSU is engaging in such difficult conversations to move the social activist agenda forward.

“We talk a lot about Fitchburg State creating a more inclusive community and diverse community,” she said. “You can bring people to a community, but you have to work to include them and make them feel safe and valued, and then you can educate them. I think we’re doing that here.”

The event was part of the FSU series “MLK’s Unfinished Business: Removing Barriers to Equity, Justice and Peace,” which will conclude with a screening of the documentary film “Teach Us All” at 3:30 p.m. Monday in Ellis White Lecture Hall. Directed by Sonia Lowman, the 2017 film examines the U.S. education system, from the historic Little Rock Nine students in 1957 to present-day disparities. The screening will be followed by a question-and-answer session.

The series is sponsored by the FSU Black Student Union, Feminist Conversations, Kappa Delta Pi, the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library, the Education and English departments, the Center for Diversity and Inclusiveness, the Office of International Education and the Office of Academic Affairs.

Fitchburg State series focuses on LGBTQ civil-rights movement

FITCHBURG — Fitchburg State University's Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library is sponsoring a series of programs this spring that explore gender and equality.

The series, called Journey to Equality: The LGBTQ Civil Rights Movement, will provide timely, relevant and engaging LGBTQ programming to the campus and North Central Massachusetts. All events are free and open to

the public. The series is funded in part by Mass Humanities, which receives support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and is an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The spring series begins Wednesday, Jan. 31, at 5:30 p.m., with Beyond the Binary, a talk by local artist and Fitchburg State alumna Alex Mancini. She will briefly discuss the evolution of her portrait and

interview exhibit, which showcases 22 nonbinary and gender nonconforming individuals. Lenny Schnier, Noah Toledo and Ally Tippet, who are profiled in the exhibit, will discuss their experiences as individuals who identify outside the gender binary. The talk will be given in Ellis White Lecture Hall in Hammond Hall, 160 Pearl St. After the talk, guests are invited to a reception and to view the exhibit in the Gallucci-Cirio

Library on the third floor of Hammond Hall. Mancini will also speak at Fitchburg High School on Wednesday, Jan. 31, at 3 p.m.

The Beyond the Binary exhibit, along with the Journey to Equality, The History of the LGBTQ Civil Rights Movement and Acting Up to Fight AIDS: Remembering the ACT Up Movement 30 Years Later exhibits will be on display in the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library through May 31.

Author Clarence Harlan Orsi will do a public reading of his essay "Taking Stock: Queering Gender Narratives" Friday, Feb. 9, at 2 p.m., in room G-01 at Hammond Hall, 160 Pearl St. The reading will be followed by a writ-

ing prompt and activity, along with time for discussion. Harlan Orsi is the author of many acclaimed essays and short stories.

The series moves off campus for a talk by author Elijah C. Nealy entitled "Helping Families with Transgender Children Navigate the Emotional Transition" on Thursday, March 8, at 6:30 p.m., at Fitchburg Public Library, 610 Main St. Bringing decades of clinical practice, especially with transgender and gender-diverse children and youth, Nealy will explore the joys and challenges the families of trans youths experience. The program is ideal not only for families but also trans youths and adults, students, educators, professionals interested in gender issues and family counseling.

The series continues with a talk by Fitchburg State professor Katherine Rye Jewell entitled "Jour-

ney to Equality: The History of the LGBTQ Civil Rights Movement" on Thursday, April 12, at 7 p.m., at Leominster Public Library, 30 West St. Using a historical and political lens, Jewell will discuss pinnacle moments of the LGBTQ civil-rights movement that helped secure basic rights while highlighting the work still needed to achieve true equality for the LGBTQ community.

The events return to the Fitchburg State campus for a queer poetry reading and open-mike night Thursday, April 26, at 7 p.m., at the Falcon Hub in Hammond Hall. Poets Hannah Larrabee, Rage Hezekiah, Jade Sytan and Hannah Baker-Siroty will read original and seminal LGBTQ poetry. Those attending are welcome to read their original or favorite queer poem. The event is co-sponsored by the Gay Straight Alliance at Fitchburg State.

LOCAL

COLLEGE TOWN | B2

FSU CELEBRATES KING'S LEGACY

“MLK’s Unfinished Business: Removing Barriers to Equity, Justice and Peace,” a series of events celebrating the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., kicks off Jan. 30 at Fitchburg State University

COLLEGE TOWN

FSU celebrates life, legacy of MLK

By Bonnie Russell

Telegram & Gazette Staff

“MLK’s Unfinished Business: Removing Barriers to Equity, Justice and Peace,” a series of events celebrating the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., kicks off at 3:30 p.m. on Jan. 30 at Fitchburg State University with a keynote address by Martin Henson of Black Lives Matter Boston.

Mr. Henson’s remarks will be preceded by a performance of Sam Cooke’s civil rights anthem “A Change is Gonna Come” by the FSU choirs.

On Jan. 31, the film “I Am Not Your Negro” will be screened twice – at noon in the Falcon Hub and at 3:30 p.m. in the main lounge. The documentary is directed by Raoul Peck and based on James Baldwin’s unfinished manuscript, “Remember This House.” Narrated by

actor Samuel L. Jackson, the film explores the history of racism in the United States through Baldwin’s reminiscences of civil rights leaders Medgar Evers, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr., as well as his personal observations of American history. Both of the screenings will be followed by question-and-answer discussions.

The events continue Feb. 1 with a panel discussion featuring students and professionals at 3:30 p.m. in the main lounge and concludes at 3:30 p.m. Feb. 5 with a screening of the documentary film “Teach Us All.”

All of the events will be held in Hammond Hall on the FSU campus at 160 Pearl St., and admission is free.

Throughout the observations, the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library will feature displays of personal letters, notes, papers and national addresses by King and W.E.B. DuBois, along with books by and about King’s legacy.

The series is sponsored by the Black Student Union, Feminist Conversations,

V. Gallucci-Cirio Library, the Education and English departments, the Center for Diversity and Inclusiveness, the Office of International Education and the Office of Academic Affairs.

Sports

Finding an end to Alzheimer's

Fitchburg State, high schools team up for charity fundraiser

FITCHBURG — The Fitchburg State University men's ice hockey team will join with local high school athletes to raise funds for Alzheimer's research on Friday, Feb. 9, and Saturday, Feb. 10, honoring the legacy of longtime Falcons hockey coach Terry McNabb. The open skate and games will be held at the Wallace Civic Center, 1000 John Fitch Highway.

The "Stick it to Alzheimer's Open Skate" will be held at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 9, where monetary donations will be accepted at the door for Terry McNabb's Team, participating in the Walk to End Alzheimer's. Donations of non-perishable food items and toiletries for the Townsend Ecumenical Outreach will also be accepted Friday night, as McNabb was also a supporter of that organization. Skates can be rented at the Civic Center during the event, or skaters may bring their own.

The event continues Saturday, Feb. 10, with Terry & Bette McNabb's Game, in memory of the late coach and youth hockey advocate. Fitchburg State will take on Framingham State at 5 p.m., with the players clad in pu



Former Fitchburg State hockey assistant coach Terry McNabb. The Falcons next month will host two days of events to raise money to fund Alzheimer's disease research in honor of McNabb. COURTESY PHOTO

sees to raise Alzheimer's awareness. The game will be followed by high school action between North Middlesex Regional and Lunenburg/Ayer Shirley.

Tickets, allowing visitors to see both games, are \$10 apiece, and all proceeds will go to Terry McNabb's Team.

Fundraiser will honor ex-FSU coach McNabb

FUNDRAISER/From Page 9

“Terry was a great coach, father, and leader in the community, but mostly he was a friend to every little kid who laced up their skates,” said FSU men’s hockey coach Dean Fuller. “He will always be a part of Falcon hockey in every practice or game we play.”

Kathy (McNabb) Hatch, the late coach’s daughter, said the fundraiser is a way for members of her family to honor their father and help other families enduring the challenges of Alzheimer’s disease.

“Fitchburg State was a big part of my father’s life,” Hatch said. “He was very happy when working with the hockey team and recruiting players. It was a special part of his life.”

McNabb’s commitment to youth hockey — for boys and girls — was also an essential part of his life.

“There were skates all over the house when we were growing up,” Hatch recalled. “Anyone who would come to the store who wanted to learn to skate, he would find them skates. My father would make sure of it.”

Terry McNabb died in 2016 after being engaged in community service throughout his life. In addition to his years as an assistant coach for the Fitchburg State Falcons, he was a longtime member and one-time president of the Nashoba Community Hospital Board of Trustees; a founding member of the PAT Youth Hockey Program; and received the Friends of the Townsend Seniors William E. May Endowment Award in 2009, recognizing his service to his town. He spent five decades running the family business, McNabb Pharmacy, in Townsend Center, and the family business is still running, owned and operated by Terry’s daughter, Karen McNabb-Noon.

Tickets to the game may be purchased in advance at McNabb Pharmacy at 233 Main St., Townsend, or by contacting the alumni office at Fitchburg State at 978-665-4555 or alumni@fitchburgstate.edu.

For information on sponsorship, contact Kathy

(McNabb) Hatch

G!

Your guide to the weekend ahead

Telegram & Gazette | February 1, 2018

'Tommy' at the opry

Table Hoppin'

Worcester Tech students to take over eatery for benefit. **Page 5**

The Beer Nut

Spencer Brewery introduces a peachy new series. **Page 7**

BLUEGRASS BAND TO PERFORM WHO MASTERPIECE AT FITCHBURG STATE | PAGE 4



'Tommy' with a *twang*

Who rock opera goes bluegrass Feb. 10 at Fitchburg State

By Richard Duckett
Telegram & Gazette Staff

FITCHBURG — The narrator of the song “Pinball Wizard” in the rock-opera concept album “Tommy” by the Who sings about how “From Soho (London) down to Brighton (England) I must have played them all.”

But how about from Soho down to Springfield, Missouri? Or Fitchburg, Massachusetts?

The HillBenders have upended the conversation in a tunefully genre-bending way with their album “Tommy: A Bluegrass Opry.” True and faithful to the music and the lyrics of the Who’s 1969 classic, the HillBenders’ adaptation shows the songs can also shine with heartfelt bluegrass colorings of guitar, mandolin, dobro, banjo, bass and earnestly rendered vocals.

The album, the third for the bluegrass HillBenders, was recorded in Springfield, Missouri, and released in 2015. “It’s been a real good run,” said Jim Rea, the group’s guitarist and the arranger for “Tommy.”

“We’ve been touring on it. It really started to take off. We went to England with it, Australia with it. It’s been a run. We’re still going with it,” Rea said.

The HillBenders will be going with it to Fitchburg State University for a full performance of “Tommy: A Bluegrass Opry” at 8 p.m. Feb. 10 at the Falcon Hub in Hammond Hall presented by Fitchburg State University CenterStage.

The HillBenders “Tommy: A Bluegrass Opry”

When: 8 p.m. Feb. 10 (doors open at 7 p.m.)

Where: The Falcon Hub, Hammond Hall, Fitchburg State University, 160 Pearl St., Fitchburg

How much: \$28; \$25 seniors, Fitchburg State alumni and staff; \$5 Fitchburg State students. Tickets can be purchased at the Weston Box Office in Weston Auditorium, 353 North St., Fitchburg; by calling (978) 665-3347; and online at fitchburgstate.edu/centerstage

“Tommy” was mostly composed by the Who guitarist Pete Townshend and tells the story of a traumatized English “deaf, dumb and blind boy” who, as “Pinball Wizard” observes, “sure plays a mean pinball.” The Who (then made up of Townshend; vocalist Roger Daltrey; the late John Entwistle, bass; and the late Keith Moon, drums) spent two years performing “Tommy” live in its entirety, including at European opera houses and the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City, where it received a 14-minute standing ovation. The spectacularly over-the-top director Ken Russell made the album into a movie in 1975.

But putting terms like “opera” and “concept” to one side, make no mistake about it — “Tommy” is rock, and few rock sequences are ever better than the “See Me, Feel Me” finale from “Tommy” that was filmed at Woodstock in 1969.

However, Rea said that longtime musician, producer and South by Southwest



The HillBenders formed as a bluegrass group 10 years ago in Springfield, Missouri. [SUBMITTED PHOTO]

music conference co-founder Louis Jay Meyers had been “noodling around these songs for 20 years” or more.

The HillBenders and Meyers became friendly after meeting at an event in Nashville. “You could count on him for good advice,” Rea said.

Meyers had the idea of “Tommy” as a “Bluegrass Opry” that could bring a new musical perspective while paying total respect to its creators. He brought the HillBenders on board for the project.

The HillBenders, celebrating its 10th anniversary, was formed in Springfield as a bluegrass band, but members “don’t all come from bluegrass” and have feet in other doors, including classic rock, Rea said. The band’s first album, “Down to My Last Dollar,” was bluegrass; the second, “Can You Hear Me?,” was more progressive, and then came “Tommy: A Bluegrass Opry.”

Meyers was the producer. The band’s lineup is Rea, guitar, vocals; Gary Rea (Rea’s cousin), bass, vocals; Nolan Lawrence, mandolin, lead vocals; Chad “Gravy Boat” Graves, dobro, vocals; and Mark Cassidy, bass, vocals.

As arranger, Rea said that musically it “took about

six months to work it out.” The bluegrass adaptation has most of the original “Tommy” with some omissions but no percussionist. Rea called Graves “the Keith Moon of the dobro.” The biggest goal or challenge was “don’t be cheesy with it. Don’t hillbilly it up and throw sawdust down on the floor,” Rea said.

“I knew the record since I was 13,” Rea said. “But I’m only 37. I’m not the first generation or even the second generation (“Tommy” fan).” Knowing that others are in the same boat, at its live shows the band adds “some dialogue if you’re not familiar with the story.” The band will also “encourage people to clap your hands.”

Someone from the “My Generation” who has offered support is Townshend himself, Rea said.

“He got word of the project. He encouraged us.”

That prompted Rea to look into more of Townshend’s work, including his solo albums. “It’s brilliant,” Rea said.

Finally, everyone met. “He said when he first heard it (“Tommy: A Bluegrass Opry”) he loved. I meant a lot to us. I know that meant a lot to Louis (Meyers).

Sadly, Meyers died suddenly

in 2016 at 60. “Tommy” would be his last project. “We lost him. It was a big hit for us,” Rea said.

The band has also met Daltrey, and playing “Tommy” in England, the HillBenders was “getting positive feedback left and right,” Rea said. “People seem to really enjoy it.”

But for the HillBenders members at present, touring and recording is “a halftime” occupation, he said. “We all do our things,” and not everyone is now in Springfield, although Rea still is.

“We’re still chipping away, but we have a great scene in Springfield, Missouri. I’m grateful for that.”

Actually, the HillBenders was in the recording studio recently cutting a record, Rea said. And a new project will see the band teaming with Keller Williams to combine bluegrass with the music of the late Tom Petty for “PettyGrass.”

“We play music we’re familiar with through our bluegrass instruments. People just like it,” Rea said. “It gives us something to talk about while still honoring bluegrass.”

Contact Richard Duckett at richard.duckett@telegram.com. Follow him on Twitter @TGRDuckett

Cover Sheet

Executive Session

Section: VII. Executive Session
Item: A. Executive Session
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material: VOTE Executive Session April 3, 2018.pdf

**Fitchburg State University
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

TO: Board of Trustees	DATE: April 3, 2018
FROM: The President	REQUEST NUMBER: 14-17/18
SUBJECT: Executive Session	

It is requested that the Board of Trustees of Fitchburg State University enter into executive session to discuss honorary degrees, and not to return to open session.