



# Fitchburg State University

## Board of Trustees

Published on September 4, 2018 at 3:42 PM EDT

---

### Date and Time

Tuesday September 11, 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 on Tuesday, September 11, 2018 at 8:00 a.m. in Presidents' Hall, Mazzaferro Center, 291 Highland Ave., Fitchburg, MA 01420

---

### Agenda

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
<b>I. Opening Items</b>			<b>8:00 AM</b>
A. Record Attendance and Guests			1 m
B. Call the Meeting to Order		Donald Irving	1 m
C. Public Comments			3 m
D. Approve Minutes from the August 21, 2018 Meeting - VOTE (05-18/19)	Approve Minutes		1 m
Approve minutes for Board of Trustees on August 21, 2018			
<b>II. President's Assessment and Goals</b>			<b>8:06 AM</b>
A. President's Goal Performance 2017-2018 Academic Year	Discuss		8 m
B. Accept the President's Goal Assessment for AY2017-2018 - VOTE(06-18/19)	Vote		1 m
C. President's Goals AY2018-2019	Discuss		8 m
D. Accept the President's Goals for AY2018-2019 - VOTE (07-18/19)	Vote		1 m
<b>III. Replacement Check Guidelines</b>			<b>8:24 AM</b>
A. Replacement Check Fee - VOTE (08-18/19)	Vote		4 m

<b>IV. Student Economic Insecurities</b>			<b>8:28 AM</b>
<b>A.</b> Presentation on student economic insecurities	FYI	Student Affairs Staff	15 m
<b>V. Notifications</b>			<b>8:43 AM</b>
<b>A.</b> Personnel Actions (N02-18/19)	FYI		1 m
<b>VI. Chair's Report</b>			<b>8:44 AM</b>
<b>A.</b> Annual DHE Trustee Conference and Trustee Orientation	FYI		5 m
<b>VII. President's Report</b>			<b>8:49 AM</b>
<b>A.</b> Opening of the university	FYI		5 m
<b>B.</b> Coming events	FYI		5 m
<b>C.</b> News Articles	FYI		1 m
<b>VIII. Closing Items</b>			<b>9:00 AM</b>
<b>A.</b> Adjourn Meeting	Vote		1 m

# Cover Sheet

## Approve Minutes from the August 21, 2018 Meeting - VOTE (05-18/19)

**Section:** I. Opening Items  
**Item:** D. Approve Minutes from the August 21, 2018 Meeting - VOTE  
(05-18/19)  
**Purpose:** Approve Minutes  
**Submitted by:**  
**Related Material:** Minutes for Board of Trustees on August 21, 2018  
VOTE Minutes.pdf

DRAFT



# Fitchburg State University

## Minutes

### Board of Trustees

---

#### **Date and Time**

Tuesday August 21, 2018 at 8:30 AM

#### **Location**

President's Conference Room, 300 Highland Avenue, Fitchburg, MA 01420

---

Notice of a meeting of the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees  
Tuesday, August 21, 2018 at 8:30 a.m. in the President's Conference Room, Sanders  
Building, 300 Highland Avenue, Fitchburg, MA 01420

---

#### **Trustees Present**

A. Clementi, A. Ramos, Jr., C. Stimpson, D. Irving, D. Nieto, D. Phillips, D. Tiernan, F.  
O'Donnell, L. Barrieau

#### **Trustees Absent**

C. Stover, G. Rodriguez-Parker

#### **Ex-Officio Members Present**

R. Lapidus

#### **Non Voting Members Present**

R. Lapidus

#### **Guests Present**

A. Cardelle, C. Canney, C. Hendry, G. Doiron, J. Bry, J. Murdoch, L. Bayless, M.  
Siderwicz, S. Swartz

---

### **I. Opening Items**

#### **A. Record Attendance and Guests**

**B. Call the Meeting to Order**

D. Irving called a meeting of the board of trustees of Fitchburg State University to order on Tuesday Aug 21, 2018 @ 8:33 AM at President's Conference Room, 300 Highland Avenue, Fitchburg, MA 01420.

**C. Public Comments**

Ms. Phillips commented that the president's recent letter sent to all staff was well done. Next, Student Trustee Alexander Ramos, Jr. was officially sworn in by Fitchburg Mayor Stephen DiNatale. Mayor DiNatale expressed his appreciation to the board in all that they do to help the City of Fitchburg and Fitchburg State University.

**D. Approve Minutes from the Board of Trustees May 1, 2018 Meeting (01-18/19)**

D. Phillips made a motion to approve minutes from the Board of Trustees on 05-01-18.

A. Clementi seconded the motion.

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

**E. Approve Minutes from the April 3, 2018 Executive Session (02-18/19)**

D. Phillips made a motion to approve minutes from the Executive Session on 04-03-18.

C. Stimpson seconded the motion.

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

**II. New Programs**

**A. Educational Studies Program - VOTE - (03- 18/19)**

President Lapidus introduced two new academic programs: Educational Studies and Environmental Public Health.

Dr. Cardelle thanked the board for their consideration of the two programs. He indicated that the programs were both approved in late May by the All University Committee. He explained that if the Board approves the program recommendations, a letter of intent will be sent to the Board of Higher Education seeking final approval. The Educational Studies Program is designed to provide an alternative path for students seeking to obtain a degree in education, but does not include Massachusetts licensure. The university is interested in providing students with multiple pathways to earn a degree in education. The program will not require the development of new courses.

There was an in-depth discussion.

D. Phillips made a motion to approve the proposal to offer a Bachelor of Science of Environmental Public Health for submission to the State Board of Higher Education.

C. Stimpson seconded the motion.

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

**B. Environmental Public Health - VOTE - (04-18/19)**

Dr. Cardelle explained the many facets to the Environmental Public Health program. This program will provide a unique avenue for students to earn a degree in public health. This program identifies an unmet educational need in Massachusetts. Ultimately, a tenure-track faculty member will need to be hired in year three if approved. There was a discussion.

C. Stimpson made a motion to approve the proposal to offer a Bachelor of Science of Educational Studies for submission to the State Board of Higher Education.

A. Clementi seconded the motion.  
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

### **III. Notifications**

#### **A. Personnel Actions (N01-18/19)**

The personnel actions for were submitted for informational purposes. There was a discussion.

### **IV. Chair's Report**

#### **A. Annual Trustee Conference on March 28, 2019- Location to be determined**

Several Trustees commented that the conference is worth attending. The location has not yet been determined.

### **V. President's Report**

#### **A. Police Academy Graduation, September 13 at 3:30 p.m. in Weston**

President Lapidus invited all board members to attend the Police Academy's first graduation ceremony to be held on September 13 at 3:30 p.m. in Weston Auditorium. He anticipates the attendance to include police chiefs and law enforcement officials. He indicated that this first-of-a-kind program has received much national/international interest and is clearly at the leading edge in its thinking.

### **VI. Closing Items**

#### **A. Adjourn Meeting**

D. Phillips made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

A. Clementi seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously 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 9:00 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
D. Phillips

**Fitchburg State University  
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

TO: Board of Trustees	DATE: September 11, 2018
FROM: The President	REQUEST NUMBER:
SUBJECT: August 21, 2018 Board Meeting Minutes	05-18/19

It is requested that the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees vote to approve the minutes from the August 21, 2018 Board Meeting

# Cover Sheet

## President's Goal Performance 2017-2018 Academic Year

**Section:** II. President's Assessment and Goals  
**Item:** A. President's Goal Performance 2017-2018 Academic Year  
**Purpose:** Discuss  
**Submitted by:**  
**Related Material:** Presidents Report to Trustees - 2017-18.2.pdf





160 Pearl Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420-2697

Tel 978.665.3101 ▪ Fax 978.665.3699

rlapidus@fitchburgstate.edu

www.fitchburgstate.edu

**Richard S. Lapidus, Ph.D.**

PRESIDENT

## **President's Report to Trustees: Goals for 2017-18 Academic Year**

### **Overview:**

The president is responsible for leading the university in an effective and efficient manner, and administering daily operations with a primary focus on quality and excellence. The goals for this year are consistent with the campus strategic plan and are designed to support and strengthen the mission and vision.

### **Goals:**

#### **1. Maintain sound financial management and operational controls.**

- The University had a clean financial audit this year with no findings.
- The University continued to reduce its structural deficit.
- The University produced a flat budget in support of fiscal conservatism.
- The University was able to hold student fees stable.
- Implemented a financial dashboard for the Board of Trustees.
- The University implemented the Marketplace module of TouchNet software that allows for on-line payment of non-student account activity thus reducing the number of cash transactions on campus.
- The University has established a project team to work on the revitalization and financing of the theatre block.
- University Development raised in excess of \$438,000.
- Grants and Sponsored programs generated approximately \$2 million of support (some grants span multiple years).

#### Information Technology Upgrades

- The University upgraded Banner.
- Blackboard was migrated from an internal system to a system hosted by Blackboard.
- The University upgraded its emergency messaging system.
- The University installed Acalog API.
- All analog cameras were replaced with IP-based digital cameras in support of campus police.
- A new management system was installed for the Linux management system.
- The University installed an ArcGIS server in the datacenter to share mapping projects with outside cities and towns.
- Electronic document imports. All digitized documents that are needed for university operations or are part of the student permanent record are now read and indexed into our Banner system automatically overnight.

- Closed-captioning. A system and workflow were developed to provide closed-captioning for live televised events.
- Mobile app upgrade. The university's mobile app (both iOS and Android) was upgraded with new shuttle-tracking software and an update to the Registrar's module.
- Seats-list update. A new "seats-list" was created specifically for students in the accelerated online program.
- Internet upgrade. One of our two internet connections was upgraded from 500mb to 1gbps.
- Theatre block connectivity. A 1 GB fiber link now connects our main campus with the new building on Main Street.
- Wireless expansion. The wireless system was expanded with new outdoor antennas to cover shared activity areas on campus.

## 2. Continue to work in support of the strategic plan goals.

Academic strategic plan goals saw positive progress or completion this past year. A select few are presented below:

### Strategic Goal 1. Strengthen Academic Programs:

- Two new academic major proposals were supported by the All University Committee (Environmental Public Health and non-licensure Education Studies). Proposals will now go to the BHE for review and final approval.
- A STEM living and learning community was redesigned and has over 35 participants for the next academic year.
- The Center for Faculty Scholarship was created which held over a dozen events throughout the year to promote and support faculty scholarship.
- The University was awarded a Special Projects Grant (The number of major grants doubled from the previous year).
- Developed and approved a new concentration in Strength and Conditioning under the Sports and Exercise Science major.
- Renewed articulation agreements with both Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) and Quinsigamond Community College (QCC) in support of ease of student transfer.
- Developed a new Interdisciplinary American Sign Language Concentration with QCC.
- Increased the number of language courses offered via Distance Language Learning.
- Conducted faculty workshops on the use of varied technologies to enhance online course offerings.
- Restructured international student events and processes to promote greater transition and retention.
- The University renewed its articulation agreement with Media University in Stuttgart Germany (3 Years).
- The Costa Rica partnership established in 2017 resulted in a group of nursing students participating in faculty-led program to San Jose.
- A faculty-led program to Ghana resulted in over 13 nursing students having an opportunity to deliver health care in a foreign country.
- The University began the implementation of BHE HS GPA Pilots for introductory mathematics courses in an effort to reduce student reliance on developmental mathematics.
- Successfully launched the 1<sup>st</sup> Police Academy culminating the first cohort of students in the 4+1 criminal justice police concentration.
- The University worked on interdisciplinary collaborations between Humanities and Science faculty to put forth a General Science concentration proposal for an IDIS major, and a new minor between

geography and criminal justice in Crime Mapping.

- Launched two new accelerated online programs in education (Instruction and Teaching and Educational Leadership.)
- Held the first student business plan competition event on campus.
- Held the first ever faculty research symposium to celebrate faculty scholarship on campus.

Strategic Goal 2. Promote Student Success by Breaking Down Barriers:

- Financial Aid, Housing and Food Services have implemented the Student Success Collaborative (SSC) Campus for the scheduling of appointments.
- The Athletic Department is using the SSC platform to run deficiency grade and attendance campaigns.
- The University received a Performance Incentive Funding (PIF) grant for Math-Pathway and co-requisite program development.
- Developed quantitative analysis mathematics pathway courses and scaled up the use of co-requisite sections to increase student completion of pathway math course in their first year.
- Developed a Math Lab, which will open in fall 2018 for students to complete remedial math requirements.
- Established a new academic standing policy that will identify students earlier in the academic warning process.
- A campus-wide forum was held to develop the institutional-wide learning objectives that will be used to help general education and the departmental majors develop and refine their program learning outcomes.
- A new general education core was proposed by the general education council, and was vetted by all departments in a summer working group.
- The First Year Experience (FYE) Committee developed a general syllabus for all FYE courses.
- Eight sections of the new FYE will be offered in fall 2018 as a scale-up implementation process of the FYE.
- A Digital Learning Working Group was formed to discuss and make recommendations for a draft campus-wide policy on online and digital learning initiatives.
- A mathematics course substitution policy for students with specific identified mathematics disabilities was drafted.
- The Community Assessment and Risk Evaluation (CARE) team has moved towards a more holistic model that examines academic, behavioral, and environmental factors of students.
- An Accessibility Committee for Electronic Content examined digital accessibility (especially videos) ensuring FCC compliance.
- Summer Bridge, a program designed to provide academically at-risk students additional support as they launch their college career, added a residential component to attract non-local students.
- A “Use of Space” policy was drafted providing structure for free speech and demonstrations on campus.
- An initiative around student food and housing insecurity was launched (“Swipe it Forward” a voucher program in collaboration with Chartwells, and an Economic and Food Insecurity Pantry.)
- The University Police Department strengthened their personal safety classes on an ongoing basis for the campus community by offering Civilian Response to Active Shooter Event (CRASE), Violence Identification, Prevention, and Response (VIPR), Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) and CPR/1st Aid/AED Training
- The University developed a “Belonging” campaign titled *You Fit Here*, that showcases students who have overcome challenges associated with feelings of disassociation or loneliness.
-

**Strategic Goal 3. Build a University Community that Embraces Civic and Global Responsibility:**

- Received a VISTA Volunteer grant that has allowed the University to increase its presence in the community specifically at Fitchburg High school.
- Began implementation of a Campus Compact Civic Engagement Action Plan.
- Hosted the Board of Higher Education's Civic Engagement Conference.
- Provided funding opportunities to the Crocker Center to facilitate student service learning work within the community.
- Held the first the community outreach of the Community Scholarship Group, which links faculty expertise with community groups and organizations needing technical experience.
- The University became the backbone institution for the Reimagine North of Main project. Among many other initiatives, the institution will develop a Resident Leadership Institute, which will increase the campuses visibility in the community.

**Strategic Goal 4. Grow and Strategically Align Fitchburg State's Resources:**

- Currently the University is analyzing 1600 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) programs to assist in the possible reprioritization of program offerings.
- Received authorization, as the first public four-year institution in Massachusetts, to become a member institution in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA).

**3. Continue to work on the improvement of student enrollments.**

- Undergraduate enrollment was similar to the prior year, which was a strong year.
- Graduate enrollment increased.
- 42% of the incoming student class self-identified as first generation.
- Diversity of the undergraduate class continues to be strong (37% self-identified as a member of an underrepresented group).
- The University further rolled-out the SLATE software platform to communicate with prospective students.
- Designed and printed a new University View Book
- Designed and printed Spanish language recruiting materials and are working on a new version.
- Continued the updating of the campus website.
- Stories developed for Contact Magazine have been better leveraged this year as a purposeful effort is being made to share the magazines storytelling through online integration with web pages and in social media posts for broader exposure and readership.
- Google AdWords campaigns have been used this year as a cost-effective method of increasing messaging to important targeted constituencies.
- Social media communication has increased on the outlets the university currently manages (Facebook, Twitter). Also testing began with Snapchat by messaging existing university students already using the platform.
- The University began reviewing its brand with an audit this year. Focus groups and quantitative surveys have been conducted and will continue with all constituencies as a means of refreshing the University value proposition, creating key institutional messages and ultimately rolling-out a new visual identity for the school to deploy in all marketing and communications.

**4. Initiate and complete a national search for a Business and Technology Dean, Dean of the Library, and an Admissions Director.**

All searches were successfully completed. Candidate pools were strong and diverse.

**5. Continue to evaluate the campus organizational structure and grow faculty and staff in support of the university mission.**

- Over fifty searches were completed this year.
- Contracted with a new Employee Assistance Program, AllOne Health, at a reduced price per a PACE initiative.
- Implemented E-Verify to include all employees and student hires, to meet compliance requirements as an institution that employs immigrant workers.
- Secured a new online training module for employees per a PACE initiative.
- Purchased an onboarding module in Interview Exchange to expedite and make more efficient the new employee onboarding process.
- Centralized event planning and its related support functions.
- Began a slight reorganization of Capital Planning and Maintenance.
- Began a slight reorganization of Student Affairs
- Continue to review other units and their processes for efficiency and effectiveness opportunities.

**6. Oversee ongoing capital projects and advocate for additional funding to address deferred maintenance and renovation needs as appropriate.**

- Continued participation in the Accelerated Energy Project in conjunction with the Department of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) further increasing energy efficiency by reducing energy expenditure, the carbon footprint and replacement of worn-out equipment and aging infrastructure.
- The University established a joint venture with MSCBA to expand options for faculty/staff housing.
- The University implemented an electronic package notification system for the student mailroom. Further exploration of self-serve mailboxes is underway.
- The University upgraded the former pizza station at the North Street Bistro to a new rotating concept for increased variety.
- The University continued its work with Reimagine North of Main, the City and NewVue Communities in support of continued revitalization efforts in neighborhood and downtown.
- Completed construction of the Game Design Intern Studio and the ideaLab on Main Street in Fitchburg. This project has been referenced by Secretary Ash as a model project in which an anchor institution works within their community to meet joint needs.
- Completed construction of the Edgerly Elevator project. All campus buildings now have automated vertically accessibility.
- The Percival Renovation – phase I infrastructure has been completed. Phase II which includes faculty offices, case rooms and classrooms is scheduled to complete December 2018.
- The Landry Arena Renovation has been completed. The building now houses a strength training facility for varsity athletics and teaching facility for Exercise and Sports Science Department. The building also contains a multipurpose sports surface for use by varsity sports, students and the City of Fitchburg Recreation Department.

**7. Continue to strengthen university/community relationships.**

- Sizer School - Board of Trustees
- Our Fathers House - Board of Directors
- Fitchburg Art Museum - Board of Trustees
- Chamber of Commerce - Board of Directors
- Fitchburg Plan - Co-Chair
- United Way - Board of Directors
- UMass Memorial Health Alliance Hospital - President's Council
- Cushing Academy - Board of Trustees
- The University served as a moderator for a number of local political debates.
- The University has placed significant effort on strengthening alumni relations with support of the Alumni Association.
- Strengthened our connection with the Fitchburg Art Museum by placing university signage in the lobby of the museum.

## Cover Sheet

### Accept the President's Goal Assessment for AY2017-2018 - VOTE(06-18/19)

**Section:** II. President's Assessment and Goals  
**Item:** B. Accept the President's Goal Assessment for AY2017-2018 -  
VOTE(06-18/19)  
**Purpose:** Vote  
**Submitted by:**  
**Related Material:**  
VOTE Accept the President's Goal Performance for 2017-2018.pdf

**Fitchburg State University  
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

TO: Board of Trustees	DATE: September 11, 2018
FROM: The President	REQUEST NUMBER: 06-18/19
SUBJECT: Accept the President's Goal Performance for AY2017-2018	

It is requested that the Board of Trustees accept the performance appraisal summary of the president by the Chairman for AY2017-FY2018 in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Commissioner of the Board of Higher Education.

And

It is requested that the Board of Trustees recommend to the Commissioner of the Board of Higher Education the maximum allowable compensation adjustment.



# Cover Sheet

## President's Goals AY2018-2019

**Section:** II. President's Assessment and Goals  
**Item:** C. President's Goals AY2018-2019  
**Purpose:** Discuss  
**Submitted by:**  
**Related Material:** Presidents - Goals 2018-19.2.pdf



160 Pearl Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420-2697  
Tel 978.665.3101 ▪ Fax 978.665.3699  
rlapidus@fitchburgstate.edu  
www.fitchburgstate.edu

**Richard S. Lapidus, Ph.D.**  
PRESIDENT

## **President's Report to Trustees: Goals for 2018-19 Academic Year**

### **Overview:**

The president is responsible for leading the university in an effective and efficient manner, and administering daily operations with a primary focus on quality and excellence. The goals for this year are consistent with the campus strategic plan and are designed to support and strengthen the mission and vision.

### **Goals:**

1. Maintain sound financial management and operational controls.
2. Continue to work in support of strategic plan goals.
3. Continue to work on the improvement of student enrollment goals.
4. Continue to evaluate the campus organizational structure and grow faculty and staff in support of the university mission.
5. Oversee ongoing capital projects and advocate for additional funding to address deferred maintenance and renovation needs as appropriate.
6. Oversee the campus branding exercise.
7. Continue to strengthen university/community relationships.

# Cover Sheet

## Accept the President's Goals for AY2018-2019 - VOTE (07-18/19)

**Section:** II. President's Assessment and Goals  
**Item:** D. Accept the President's Goals for AY2018-2019 - VOTE  
(07-18/19)  
**Purpose:** Vote  
**Submitted by:**  
**Related Material:** VOTE President's 2018-2019 Goals.pdf

**Fitchburg State University  
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

TO: Board of Trustees	DATE: September 11, 2018
FROM: The President	REQUEST NUMBER: 07-18/19
SUBJECT: Accept the President's Goals for AY2018/2019	

It is requested that the Board of Trustees accept the President's goals for AY2018-2019.

# Cover Sheet

## Replacement Check Fee - VOTE (08-18/19)

**Section:** III. Replacement Check Guidelines  
**Item:** A. Replacement Check Fee - VOTE (08-18/19)  
**Purpose:** Vote  
**Submitted by:**  
**Related Material:** Replacement Check Fee Guidelines.pdf  
VOTE replacement check fee 09-11-18.pdf

## REPLACED CHECK FEE CHARGE OF \$30.00

Most financial institutions charge an account \$30 - \$35 to replace an uncashed check. The finance department is proposing that the University institute a \$30 fee to reissue a check of \$100 or more, once notification has been sent to the student.

We are hoping that by instituting this fee, more students will be encouraged to take advantage of the e-refund. For those students receiving a paper check, the hope is they will cash it within a reasonable period of time, and if not, this fee will help recoup some of the costs associated with this time-consuming, burdensome process.

If the student informs us that the check needs to be reissued prior to receiving our notification, FSU will not charge the student the handling fee.

Before implementing this process, we are working on a system to notify students by email once a refund check is being mailed to them.

Current process:

Our students have two methods of getting a refund:

- A) E-refund – the student enters their banking information online.  
Once this is done, any refund generated by student accounts office is sent by financial services department to the bank as an ACH file.  
An entry is made in the ledger for the batch sent to the bank.  
Total process time is approximately 30 minutes for each e-refund ACH batch numbering one to infinity and the student receives their funds within two days.  
For 99.5 percent of the students, the process ends here.  
(Occasionally an ACH will bounce back if an account has been closed or incorrect information was entered by the student. Student accounts office will then contact the student to update his/her banking information online.)
- B) Check refund – if no online banking information is entered, a check request is processed by student accounts and sent to financial services department for a check to be cut and mailed to the last address on the student's file.  
Financial services uploads the information received from student accounts and creates individual checks. The list of checks created is sent to the bank to ensure that checks presented at the bank match the check numbers and amounts originated at FSU.  
An entry is made in the ledger for the batch of checks.  
Financial services monitors check payments on a daily basis as all outliers - incorrect keyed entry, over 90 days outstanding check, mismatch amount - are sent to our office by the bank for verification before payment.  
Approximately 20 percent of checks of varying amounts that are generated and mailed are not presented to the bank on a timely basis.  
Financial services also does monthly reconciliations to monitor these outstanding checks.
- C) Steps to void and replace a check:  
Contact student accounts to verify source of funds.  
Federal funds have to be returned to the federal government within 240 days.  
Contact student/vendor to verify that check was not cashed (email/telephone/mail).  
On the bank's website, void each check individually in two different places.  
Make an entry in the general ledger to void the check internally.  
Notify student accounts of the void and replacement check.  
Student accounts puts a notation on the student's file.  
Do a replacement check.
- D) Outstanding non-federal refunded checks of \$100 or more and three years old and older have to be sent to the state as abandoned property, while federal Title IV uncashed aid must be sent back to the program after 240 days.

**Fitchburg State University  
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

TO: Board of Trustees	DATE: September 11, 2018
FROM: The President	REQUEST NUMBER:
SUBJECT: Replacement Check Fee	08-18/19

It is requested that the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees vote to institute a \$30 fee to reissue a check per approved guidelines.

# Cover Sheet

## Personnel Actions (N02-18/19)

**Section:** V. Notifications  
**Item:** A. Personnel Actions (N02-18/19)  
**Purpose:** FYI  
**Submitted by:**  
**Related Material:** BOT Notifications 09112018.pdf



**FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Board of Trustees**

**NOTIFICATIONS**

<b>TO:</b> Board of Trustees	<b>DATE:</b> September 11, 2018
<b>FROM:</b> The President	<b>NOTIFICATION NUMBER:</b> N02-18/19
<b>SUBJECT:</b> Personnel Actions	

**New Hire**

Brian Borneman, BS Effective: 9/24/18	Staff Asst., Risk & Emergency Manager Environmental Health & Safety	\$65,000.00
Joseph Ferguson, MRP Effective: 8/20/18	Director, ReImagine North of Main Finance and Administration	\$63,000.00
John Lohmann, JD Effective: 9/1/18 End: May 31, 2019	Assistant Professor Business Administration	\$59,500.00

**Promotion**

Scott Fournier Effective: 9/4/18	From: Clerk V To: Assistant Director Admissions	From: \$44,327.92 To: \$47,500.00
-------------------------------------	---	--------------------------------------

**Change in Salary (adjustment)**

William Fisher Effective: 8/1/18	Staff Assistant, Lieutenant University Police	From: \$70,986.44 To: \$72,986.44
-------------------------------------	--	--------------------------------------

**Change in Work Schedule**

Lynn D'Agostino Effective: 9/1/18	Staff Assoc. Field Placement & Partnering Coord. From: .8 FTE To: 1.0 FTE Education	From: \$52,500.00 To: 65,625.00
--------------------------------------	---	------------------------------------

# Cover Sheet

## Annual DHE Trustee Conference and Trustee Orientation

**Section:** VI. Chair's Report  
**Item:** A. Annual DHE Trustee Conference and Trustee Orientation  
**Purpose:** FYI  
**Submitted by:**  
**Related Material:** MEMORANDUM.pdf



## Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

MAIN OFFICE  
One Ashburton Place, Room 1401  
Boston, MA 02108  
TEL (617) 994-6950  
WEB [www.mass.edu](http://www.mass.edu)

OFFICE of STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE  
75 Pleasant Street  
Malden, MA 02148  
TEL (617) 391-6070  
WEB [www.mass.edu/osfa](http://www.mass.edu/osfa)

Carlos E. Santiago  
*Commissioner*  
Chris Gabrieli  
*Board Chairman*

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Community College Presidents  
State University Presidents  
Martin Meehan, President, University of Massachusetts System

**FROM:** Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner

**DATE:** September 4, 2018

**SUBJECT: SAVE THE DATES:**  
- **January 29 New Trustee Orientation**  
- **March 28 DHE Trustee Conference**

I am pleased to announce two professional development opportunities for public higher education trustees:

**DHE's New Trustee Orientation and Training will be held on Tuesday, January 29, 2019 from 10am-2pm at MassBay Community College.**

This orientation and training is designed to give trustees who are new to the public higher education system a foundation in the roles and responsibilities of their role as a trustee. The day will be facilitated by DHE's General Counsel, Dena Papanikolaou, and will feature sessions by staff from the State Ethics Commission, the Attorney General's office, and the Office of the Inspector General.

Trustees who have been appointed since March 2018, who have not received an orientation training by DHE, or who would like a refresher course are encouraged to attend. Student trustees are also welcome.

**DHE's Annual Trustee Conference will be held on Thursday, March 28, 2019 from 9am-3pm at the Doubletree Hotel in Westborough.**

This year's agenda, drafted by Matt Noyes, our Director of Trustee and Governmental Relations, will feature a demonstration of the Performance Measurement Tool that is being developed by DHE. This tool will give institutions and boards important data about their performance in key areas and how they compare to their peers as well as to the higher education system. Additionally, there will be training opportunities for new trustees and breakout sessions

that will provide the opportunity for trustees to learn more about specific issues of interest to them.

The conference is an invaluable opportunity for trustees to network and learn more about their fiduciary responsibilities, the current challenges facing individual campuses and the shared vision for the public higher education system at large. It is vital that we have strong representation from all institutions at this convening.

*Please forward this information to Chairs and members of your Board of Trustees and encourage them to attend.*

If you have any questions or would like more information about the conference, please do not hesitate to contact Matt Noyes, Director of Trustee and Governmental Relations, at [mnoyes@dhe.mass.edu](mailto:mnoyes@dhe.mass.edu).

# Cover Sheet

## News Articles

**Section:** VII. President's Report  
**Item:** C. News Articles  
**Purpose:** FYI  
**Submitted by:**  
**Related Material:** Clips for Sept 2018.pdf

# Sentinel & Enterprise

SERVING ASHBURNHAM, ASHBY, FITCHBURG, LANCASTER, LEOMINSTER, LUNENBURG, SHIRLEY, TOWNSEND AND WESTMINSTER

FRIDAY, July 20, 2018

[www.sentinelandenterprise.com](http://www.sentinelandenterprise.com)

\$1.50

## Downtown revival from vision to reality

### Theater Block 'ideaLab' soon to open, one of several Fitchburg projects in works

**By Amanda Burke**

[aburke@sentinelandenterprise.com](mailto:aburke@sentinelandenterprise.com)

FITCHBURG — Residents will begin to see the fruits of investment near Main Street next month.

A collaborative space known as the "ideaLab" will open to students and non-students alike on the second floor of the Theater Block, Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus told a crowd that included investors and

community development officials at the university Thursday.

"The second floor will open sometime in August. it's completely built out. The idea is to create a space where our students, our faculty, people from the community, can share the space, think about projects (and) try to incubate them," said Lapidus.

The NewVue Communities community development organization will have

a space at the Theater Block to offer assistance to prospective small business owners, said Lapidus.

The North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce offers "micro loans" to for riskier projects banks are disinclined to finance, he said.

"We're hoping that the synergy, creating a one-stop shop, if you will, will be attractive to the city and a benefit to

Please see **PROJECTS/6**

***“This kind of work is not about instant gratification. It really takes time, hard work and a little bit of luck.”***

*Eric Rosengren, chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank in Boston, pointing out that Fitchburg was one of four Bay State cities selected to participate in the first round of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston's Working Cities Challenge*

# Project by project, a downtown transformation

**PROJECTS/**From Page 1

students as well,” he said.

The Theater Block renovation is one of four downtown projects that ReImagine North of Main Co-director and Montachusett Opportunity Council Vice President Patricia Pistone said are either underway or in the “pipeline.”

Our vision “is to ReImagine this neighborhood as a neighborhood of choice, where people want to live, work and invest,” she said.

Together, those projects — renovating the old City Hall, the Theater Block, the Fitchburg Arts Community (the former BF Brown School) and Fitchburg Public Library expansion — equate to \$100 million in investment, according to Pistone.

The progress of those project was the subject of a morning event at FSU that was attended by private investors, developers, city development officials and Eric Rosengren, chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank in Boston.

Fitchburg Mayor Stephen DiNatale said City Hall renovations are “a little ahead of schedule” and could be completed within two years.

Lapidus said the university will seek a funding to allow for the creation of a restaurant at City Hall, an announcement met with applause from the audience. City Hall Cafe closed last year.

DiNatale noted the proposed library expansion, a project projected to cost about \$31 million, and said the city chose not to table one big project in sake of another.

“We have the fiscal



Fitchburg State President Richard Lapidus speaks during a forum at the university Thursday morning on developments underway to transform the downtown. The ideaLab, a collaborative space, will open next month on the second floor of the Theater Block on Main Street, serving students and non-students alike. Looking on, from left, are Patricia Pistone, Montachusett Opportunity Council vice president, Mayor Stephen DiNatale and Eric Rosengren, chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank in Boston. Below, NewVue Communities Executive Director Marc Dohan, left, and Rosengren address the crowd.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE PHOTOS / JOHN LOVE



strength to make these all happen,” he said.

Marc Dohan, executive director of NewVue Communities, said his organi-

zation will close Friday on the former BF Brown school, where the roof was burned out in an early-morning fire two years ago.

The organization will use a \$1.6 million insurance settlement to begin renovating and rebuilding, he said. When completed,

the resulting Fitchburg Arts Community will have 60 units of “artist-preference” housing/work space and a communal “maker

space,” according to Dohan.

NewVue will apply for more funding to perform additional renovations later this year, he said.

“We’re beginning the process to help the phoenix rise from the ashes,” said Dohan.

Matthew Fournier, owner of Elite Construction & Design, and president of Fitchburg Pride, said his company is looking for entrepreneurs and investors to get involved with two projects underway on Main Street.

Fournier is leading renovations to a 7,200 square-foot building at 35 Main St. he said could house two or three commercial retailers when completed.

A 5,700 square-foot building at 409 Main St. is slated house four residential units, with a restaurant at street level, he said.

He said he still needs a restaurateur on board.

“We’ve got a great space, it will have open-air seating and be able to have that city experience that you get in South Boston for a fraction of the cost in Fitchburg,” he said.

Rosengren said Fitchburg was one of four Bay State cities selected to participate in the first round of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston's Working Cities Challenge.

Through that program the city received \$400,000 grant in 2013. Rosengren said the process of revitalizing a community is a long one, pointing to Boston as a city that improved over decades.

“This kind of work is not about instant gratification,” he said. “It really takes time, hard work and a little bit of luck.”



Fitchburg State administrators and city officials are working to educate new students, like those shown in 2015 on freshman move-in day, on the positive features of the downtown. SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE FILE PHOTO

## IT'S COLLEGE TOWN 101

### FSU, city officials aim to get students out and about in Fitchburg

By Elizabeth Dobbins  
edobbins@sentinelandenterprise.com

FITCHBURG — A walk across the 45-acre Fitchburg State University campus reveals no shortage of backpack-toting students hurrying to and from classes.

But wander even three-quarters of a mile from campus and the chances of spotting even one of the university's over 4,000 students drops dramatically.

Leaders in both the city and university interested in reaping the economic and other benefits of close town-gown relationship have long asked how this could change.

Now students are asking, too.

For the past four months, honors college students enrolled in economics professor Christa Marr's class — "Current Events and Service Learning" — have focused on ways to recast Fitchburg as a "college town."

"(I) don't think people appreciate the gem that we have being so close to Main Street," said Fitchburg State Provost Alberto Cardelle, who suggested this semester's research question.

Marr said the feedback from a



Fitchburg State junior Dominique Goyette-Connerty, 19, of Ashby talks about people's perception of Fitchburg in a Current Events and Service Learning class on Tuesday. SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE/JOHN LOVE

listening session and online survey, which drew over 700 responses, an unusually high return rate, offers a good idea of what faculty and students think of Fitchburg and hope to see in the future.

One of the big issues is transportation. Limited parking at FSU means students are reluctant to leave their spots to drive elsewhere.

Powered by BoardOnTrack. "Once you get a spot on campus,

you don't want to leave it," Marr said.

Students say shuttle service is unreliable and rarely used. Though many say they would be willing to walk downtown, they also bring up the question of safety.

"A lot of people I talk to on campus think this is the 'dirty 'Burg,'"

Please see **COLLEGE/6**



# Attempting to forge a college town

**COLLEGE/**From Page 1  
said Dominique Goyette-Connerty, an FSU junior who grew up in Ashby. “They seem generally scared about downtown.”

About 70 percent reported safety was a concern, according to the course’s survey. The intersection of North and Main street also ranks in the top 50 highest location for crashes in the state, as reported by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

Executive Director of Community Development Tom Skwierawski said both the city and university are interested in making the less than the mile distance between campus and downtown more walkable and bikeable.

The revitalization and development of the North Street corridor over the past 10 years has not gone unnoticed by students. Alyssa Anderson, a sophomore, said her parents visited with her sister in about 2011 before much of the construction by the university on this strip.

“My dad was like ‘I hated it there.’ It was (like) empty abandoned houses when he first toured here,” Anderson said.

He noticed the improvements when his younger daughter visited. However, even with the changes, Anderson said she was drawn to the modern look of the campus, not the surrounding area.

The students also spoke to a number of people who said they didn’t go downtown, because there weren’t any activities drawing them there. However, sophomore Micalea Goldenberg said the issue might also be marketing.

“Some of the people in the listening project and even in the survey said they wanted a bowling alley and a escape room and Fitchburg already has that,” she said. “It seems like we already have a lot of the stuff in place. We just need people to be aware of what we have.”

Several students in the class said they were excited to learn about some projects slated for downtown Fitchburg, including the renovation City Hall and the artist housing at the former B.F. Brown School.

Though the college announced

the renovation of the Theater Block on Main Street in fall 2016, students said until this class they knew little about the project, which seemed distant from campus.

Though only a handful of students in the class said they were considering staying in Fitchburg after graduation, several were cautiously optimistic for what these developments could mean for the future of the city.

Goyette-Connerty said she has even found herself defending the city after enrolling in the course.

“I’m more quick to scoff at people and correct them now when they’re like ‘Oh yeah, dirty Fitchburg. Whatever,’” she said, laughing. “I’m like, ‘Actually, they’re working really hard to renovate and, in case you didn’t know, City Hall and the FSU Theater Block and all that stuff is going on.’”

But if these changes do have the effect on the city that leaders hope, some wonder what that will mean for the area’s affordability — the factor that convinced many students in the room to choose Fitchburg State.

“If the city gets nicer then maybe the price will go up,” said Goldenberg. “That’s probably why the locals would get better, because they may not be able to afford to stay any more.”

Cardelle said that’s the “double-edged sword” of revitalization efforts, but he believes Fitchburg is still a long way from having that problem. Cardelle has worked at the college since 2016, but in January also became the co-project director of ReImagine North of Main, a community development project for downtown.

Cardelle and others in the college and community plan to listen to the student’s final presentation later this month.

Any insights gained through this presentation will add to other ongoing efforts to bridge the gap between the university and city.

“I think there has to be an understanding that the university’s success is tied to the city’s success,” he said. Next semester, a class is expected to gather feedback on the same topic from members of the community.

Cardelle said city and college admir.

ties over the past 15 years.

More faculty and staff are also living closer to the campus, which Cardelle in part credits to a push by human resources to encourage new hires to live in the area.

He said the university has increased funding for programming on the weekends to encourage students to stay near campus even when classes aren’t in session.

This all plays into the administration’s goal of making Fitchburg a “destination college,” according to Cardelle.

The concept of fostering a connection between the university and the city isn’t new, said Skwierawski. Building the relationship between the city and the college was listed in city’s strategic plan developed two decades ago.

“Fitchburg State is one of the biggest assets that we have,” Skwierawski said.

It exists alongside other plans for economic development, such as the idea of a creative economy fostered by institutions like the Fitchburg Art Museum.

“We’re not going to see the downtown we want to see with college students alone,” Skwierawski said. However, he added college students are a part of this equation, mentioning other communities, like Lowell, as examples.

“They’re college towns, but they’re also much more than that,” he said.

Beyond bringing more foot traffic downtown, a close relationship with the college has other bonuses like an agreement approved several years ago that allows college and city officials to better communicate about noise complaints, he said. He emphasized the relationship has to be “mutually beneficial.”

Cardelle believes the city and the college are heading in a positive direction, but the results won’t be immediate.

“This kind of work takes time and I understand why,” he said. “People lose patience...It’s an organic process with many starts and stops.”

Follow Elizabeth Dobbins on Twitter @DobbinsSentinel 33 of 57

Fitchburg State University - Board of Trustees - Agenda - Tuesday September 11, 2018 at 8:00 AM

# Sentinel & Enterprise

**YOUR HOMETOWN - YOUR NEWSPAPER**

SERVING ASHBURNHAM, ASHBY, FITCHBURG, LANCASTER, LEOMINSTER, LUNENBURG, SHIRLEY, TOWNSEND AND WESTMINSTER

WEDNESDAY, July 25, 2018

[www.sentinelandenterprise.com](http://www.sentinelandenterprise.com)

\$1.50



Fitchburg State University students, from left, Cassidy Vargas, Nicole Byrne and Bridget Diggins, pose with a group in Ghana.

COURTESY PHOTO

## Eye-opening trip for students

### Future nurses from Fitchburg State University visit Ghana

By **Amanda Burke**

[aburke@sentinelandenterprise.com](mailto:aburke@sentinelandenterprise.com)

FITCHBURG — Nursing student Cassidy Vargas was humbled to learn patients she treated at a health fair in Ghana last month had little other access to medical care.

“They were using us as their physical, which means they never, ever ever go to the hospital,” she said. “That made me sad, because I can walk into my (primary care physician’s) office like nothing and be seen. For them, they don’t have that

Powered by BoardOnTrack  
Please see **GHANA/8**

# FSU students learn much in Ghana trip

**GHANA**/From Page 1

luxury.”

Vargas, of Leominster, was one of 12 Fitchburg State University students in the Department of Nursing who traveled to Ghana for a five-credit study abroad program.

During the two-week trip, Vargas and her classmates provided medical services to Ghanaians at “open-air” health fairs at local markets. They examined over 500 patients, performing eye exams, reading vital signs and taking glucose readings.

Vargas also worked in a clinic that provides care to new and expecting mothers. There she saw how limited transportation in Ghana impedes mothers’ ability to access care, leading to high rates of maternal mortality.

“They either don’t have transportation to get to the hospital, or they don’t have transportation to get there to deliver their baby, thus they have their baby at home,” she said.

Professors Deborah Benes and Akwasi Duah organized the program by partnering with Ghana’s West End University. Duah grew up in Ghana, and has lived in the United States for 14 years.

Benes said the program is a step toward training students to become “global health nurses” who are sensitive to cultural differences across nationalities.

“As nurses they need to be culturally aware and culturally sensitive, but were never given the opportunity to go somewhere else and experience another culture,” she said.

Duah said Fitchburg and Worcester County more broadly have a large population of Ghanaian immigrants.

“It’s likely that someone will take care of a Ghanaian patient,” he said.

Students learned how the environment and institutions impacted individuals’ health, the professors said.

“It gave them a real live expe-

rience to see why they might have hypertension or diabetes, and why their life expectancy is lower than ours is,” said Benes.

FSU students screened residents for common medical issues at health-fairs in markets in Kasoa, and in Cape Coast, a city Duah said was formerly the nation’s capital and a center for the slave trade.

For Vargas, the most rewarding aspect of the trip was seeing the difference the medical care she provided made in the lives of patients.

She recalled shadowing a local community health nurse as she visited patients at their homes. In Ghana, these nurses pay regular visits to residents at their homes, where they assess patients and return for follow ups after a health issue, said Vargas.

While shadowing the nurse, Vargas met a woman who was suffering from Tuberculosis and AIDS. The woman’s blood pressure was dangerously low, said Vargas, and she required treatment at a hospital.

They called an ambulance, and Vargas said if not for the visit from the nurse, the woman’s condition may have worsened, she said.

“She said, ‘Thank you so much, I don’t know what I would have done if you hadn’t been regularly checking on me,’” Vargas recalled.

Vargas said Fitchburg would benefit from adopting the visiting nurses model.

“We currently don’t have a system like that,” she said. “We have the (visiting nurses association) but that’s not community nursing; it’s not seeing every single person in the community. I wish we had something like that.”

Duah and Benes want to continue the Ghana study-abroad program for years to come. Students from West End University will travel to Fitchburg State University in October, said Benes, as part of a budding exchange program.



Dr. Deborah Benes, left, and nursing student Cassidy Vargas assess a health fair

## COLLEGE TOWN

# FSU nursing students provide health care in Ghana

**By Bonnie Russell**

Telegram &amp; Gazette Staff

Fitchburg State University nursing professor Deborah Benes would like to create a little army of global nurses and recently realized a first step in that goal when a dozen nursing students from the university spent time in Ghana.

Ms. Benes, who is a nurse practitioner, and nursing professor Akwasi Duah accompanied a team of students to Accra, Ghana, as part of a new program created by the Department of Nursing specifically for nursing majors who are interested in study abroad, which allows them to earn five credits in community health nursing.

Why was Ghana chosen for the inaugural trip?

In addition to the rich cultural heritage of the country, Mr. Duah, who came to the United States from Ghana 14 years ago, said it was easy to set things up because of the connections he has there.

“My uncle is the registrar at West End University and he was able to help arrange an itinerary,” Mr. Duah said.

The group held health fairs at outdoor markets, visited clinics, hospitals and a middle school, as well as engaging in some door-to-door public health work. There was also time to do some sightseeing.

In the door-to-door public health work, the students went out with three Ghanaian community health nurses and talked to people and did screenings and assessments, Ms. Benes said.

Ms. Benes explained that the families they visited lived in compounds, which are large walled areas containing multiple individual rooms that house eight to 10 people. They would spend about a half hour at each, doing quick assessments on ailments and injuries, making referrals if necessary.

“One person had been hit by a car and had pain but could walk,” Ms. Benes said, adding that people often don’t seek treatment because they can’t afford it or don’t have time.

At the Health Fairs, among other things, the students were able to provide information on preventing

## COLLEGE

*From Page B1*

hypertension and diabetes and conduct ear, nose and throat exams.

During a hospital visit to Apam Catholic Hospital the students worked in wards, which are actually separate buildings connected by walkways.

They were assigned to different areas such as pediatrics and male or female to take care of patients for the day.

There isn’t as much technology in Ghana compared to what the students were used to back home and they really had to do a lot of critical thinking, Ms. Benes explained.

The students appreciated seeing the differences in nursing care, “being able to do much with little,” Mr. Duah said.

One of those students is Saisha Matias, 21, of Worcester.

“Studying abroad truly changes perspective. Meeting people who have less than we do yet make so much out of it, taught me to be grateful for what we have. It taught me how to give back without regret. This experience has marked who I am as a person, and my passion for community outreach. I hope to inspire young people to give back to their community and push themselves despite the circumstances they may face. I am grateful to have experienced community health nursing in Ghana,” Ms. Matias, a senior working toward a bachelor’s in the science of nursing, wrote in an email.



This section of the Nashua River lies in Lancaster near the Bennett's Bridge on Route 117.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE FILE PHOTO

## RIVER RESEARCH REVEALED

### FSU students present a look at the Nashua

By **Amanda Burke**  
aburke@sentinel  
andenterprise.com

FITCHBURG — The health of the Nashua River, the diversity of fish within it, and how often local residents participate in activities at the river were all topics of original research Fitchburg State University students presented on Thursday.

“The health of the river is a good indicator of the overall environment,” said Earth and Geographic Science Professor Jane Huang.

Please see **RIVER/5**



Fitchburg State students presented the results of their nine-week summer research projects Thursday at President's Hall. The projects explored various facets of the health of the local community and the Nashua River watershed.

PHOTO COURTESY OF FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY



Members of the organization Clean Streets waded thro

# Students reveal river research

**RIVER/**From Page 3

Huang was one of several faculty members who advised the students during the five-week, paid summer research project.

The students presented their findings before peers, professors and a few city officials at the President's Hall. Research funding was provided in part by the Lloyd G. Balfour Foundation, Bank of America and the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts.

Students Alesia Burnett and Nicole Zwicker studied fish diversity at nine points along the Nashua River, discovering biodiversity was low in both urban and non-urban areas, Burnett said.

"It's not just urbanization" contributing to the lack of biodiversity, she said.

A four-person research team of Jacob Elie, Robert Snider, Monica Liao Queliz, and Benjamin Borodawka studied recreational physical activity

among local adults.

The team looked at the prevalence of "physical recreational activity" among participants, assessing trends among socio-economic and racial groups and barriers to accessing the city's parks and trails.

The students found lower rates of activity among racial and ethnic minorities, according to Liao Queliz. In many cases, participants lacked transportation to areas for outdoor recreation or didn't know about them.

"Public transportation is a big factor for a lot of people," said Elie, adding that future research could focus on spreading awareness of public parks and increasing access to public transportation.

Another research duo, Heather Bosworth and Chelsea Lashua, simulated the conditions of the Nashua River found in urban and non-urban areas.

By measuring plant respiration and the presence of biological matter, the

students showed that streams running through rural and forested areas are more "healthy" than urban waterways.

"The more urban a stream is, the more polluted the water," said Lashua.

Emmanuella Agyemang, Rachel Bordieri, Camila Perlas De Leon, Alexander Joscelyn and Lily Price studied overall health in Fitchburg. Anne Saball, a student research mentor, presented research on the health of the Nashua River watershed, and Samuel Gallagher studied how land on it.

Caroline Anderson used a digital simulation to show how various levels of flooding would impact the city, finding its southeast area is the most vulnerable.

Samantha Richard found the presence of microplastics in the river, and Jack Gangemi and Benjamin McGuire presented original research on water quality of the watershed.

## FSU increasing transfer credit limit

FITCHBURG — Effective immediately, Fitchburg State University is increasing the limit of earned academic credits that prospective students can transfer from other institutions of higher education.

The move aligns with Fitchburg State's values of accessibility and affordability, and will make it easier for transfer students to keep their academic progress on track.

The new policy allows transfer students to bring 90 credits from accredited four-year institutions and 75 credits from regionally accredited two-year schools. The previous caps were 75 credits from four-year schools and 60 credits from two-year institutions.

The university is not changing its requirement that transfer students complete at least 50 percent of the coursework in their major at Fitchburg State, as well as one-quarter of their overall undergraduate credits.

*For more information, please visit [www.fitchburgstate.edu/admissions/undergraduate/requirements/transfer](http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/admissions/undergraduate/requirements/transfer).*

# Public colleges confront student hunger, housing needs over summer

## Central Mass. campuses open food pantries

By Scott O'Connell  
Telegram & Gazette Staff

WORCESTER – Equipped with new statistical evidence showing the extensive need on their campuses, local public colleges and universities are ramping up efforts to provide safety net programs to students over the summer break.

This year, all four public colleges in Central Massachusetts have launched or plan to launch new on-campus food pantries as a stopgap measure to help students struggling to find meals. Those schools also have introduced or tried to better publicize

existing programs aimed at students dealing with hunger, homelessness, or other issues between semesters.

The state's higher education department has also focused its attention on the problem, and is testing ideas of its own that could provide solutions.

Unlike the state's public K-12 schools, which can lean on federal funding to provide summer meals programs and other social service outreach during the long break, the public higher education system, already cash-strapped, is attempting to tackle student poverty without much government assistance.

"I think our public institutions have really stepped up on this, without funding from us,

and without prodding from us," said the state's higher education commissioner, Carlos Santiago.

## Hunger, homelessness widespread

While local college officials said they have always known some of their students struggle to get by, a pioneering study of the state's public higher education campuses released this spring for the first time provided the stark numbers behind the issue. According to that report, 44 percent of community college students and 33 percent of state university students said they were struggling to feed themselves. While 40 percent of the former and 32 of the latter also

had trouble finding permanent housing.

"I've gone through it in my own life – I know how it feels," said Ashley Forhan, a second-year student at Quinsigamond Community College, which is why the Clinton native jumped at the chance to operate the school's first on-site food pantry, opening next week.

Ms. Forhan, who will oversee the donation-funded pantry through a work-study program at the college, said hunger can put people in a "criminality mindset – you do whatever it takes to get food ... you're not thinking straight; you're not thinking clearly." She and Quinsigamond officials said it was not uncommon for some

students to simply steal items from the campus cafeteria.

"They were struggling, and there was an embarrassment factor," said Theresa Vecchio, Quinsigamond's dean of students, who said the college now has a policy where cashiers will discreetly comp students who can't pay for their meal and point them to her office for help if they're dealing with persistent food insecurity.

Worcester State University offers a similar service to desperate students through its emergency fund program, which provides money for meals and other necessities. Students are developing an on-campus food



From Page A3

pantry, which should debut sometime in the next six months, said Julie Kazarian, dean of students.

In addition, the university is working on a plan to offer year-round housing contracts, in an effort to accommodate students who can't find lodging elsewhere during the summer and winter breaks. Worcester State enrolls several students coming out of foster care, for example, she said. "They don't always necessarily have somewhere else to go" when the dorms empty out in May, she said.

Both Fitchburg State University and Mount Wachusett Community College have made food pantries available over the summer at their campuses for the first time this year. Officials at the schools said the services have received dozens of visits from students since the spring semester ended.

"It's clearly a need. We found the same thing over the winter break as well," said Shelley Errington Nicholson, director of Mount Wachusett's Brewer Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement. "We know their needs don't end just because class isn't in session."

## Funding hard to come by

At all four public campuses in the region, offices are open throughout the summer to help students connect with and navigate external social service programs like the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Quinsigamond's food pantry, which is scheduled to have a soft opening on July 10, will have a confidential intake program on site.

But the colleges themselves aren't able to rely much on government assistance to cover their summer social programs. With most public campuses in line to receive negligible increases in their state funding next year, local officials said they are relying entirely on fundraising and food drives to stock their food pantries' shelves this summer.

"I would love to see some sort of funding for a supplemental meal program, similar to what's done at the K-12 level," Ms. Nicholson said, referring to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's nutrition initiatives, which reimburse elementary and secondary schools for the cost of providing

For now, at least, college officials can rely on the state's higher education department to support their efforts, even if it can't provide funding for them. Mr. Santiago said his administration is trying to help. It has worked to convince state-operated housing programs to be more open to accepting college students, for example – and is working on some statewide initiatives of its own.

The higher education department is partnering with state agencies and campus presidents on a pilot program that would allow a small number of community college students to live in state university dorms, for instance, a step toward solving the housing dilemma for a Massachusetts community college system that does not have on-campus residences. While the locations for that proposal have yet to be worked out, Mr. Santiago said, he's been encouraged by the overall buy-in from college presidents.

"I think it's important for us to find the institutional leaders that will lead the way" on the hunger and housing issues, he said. "I've quite frankly put homelessness and food security as one of the things I'm working on."

## Erasing the stigma

Money alone can't solve one of the most challenging problems dogging campuses' food and housing outreach efforts. Especially over the summer, local officials said, it's difficult not only to inform students that services are available, but also to persuade them to take advantage.

"There's a lot of stigma surrounding anybody needing help, really," and college students are no exception, said Heather Mazzaferro, who works in Fitchburg State's housing and residential services division.

While she's only been in her position since December, Ms. Mazzaferro recalled instances of hungry students asking to take something from the candy basket in her office, or the time one student "wouldn't make eye contact" out of shame when he asked her for the directions to a free food program going on in her building.

"When he walked out the door, I just started crying, that somebody has to feel that way just about eating," she said.

Other campus administrators acknowledged that social pressure is especially high on college students to be self-reliant,

"Some of these students are paying for college, they're paying for their car and insurance – they're putting themselves through," said Shane Franzen, associate director of student development at Fitchburg State. "In order to do that, they end up having to couch surf some nights, or get someone to get them into the dining hall to get a meal."

The particular challenges facing college students – and public college students especially, who are increasingly likely to be first-generation students from low-income and/or immigrant families – makes the location of support services on their campuses especially critical, some local officials said, even if those same services also exist off campus.

"I feel like there's more of a comfort level when you're at a place for four years and you can find people that you trust there," Ms. Mazzaferro said, adding that she hopes the increasing availability of campus-based food and housing programs will help "normalize" the idea of students seeking assistance.

Some college officials said they have started to notice a change already.

"People are talking about it now. They're coming forward more," Ms. Nicholson said. "They're more comfortable asking for help."

## The long-term view

At the same time, campus administrators acknowledged their institutions' limited means prevents them from singlehandedly solving the problem. Mount Wachusett's food pantry, for example, which allows students to take up to 20 items a month, is only supposed "to be a Band-Aid," Ms. Nicholson said.

But there's also a sense at local colleges that it's in everyone's best interests, including the institutions themselves, for them to be more involved in helping students. Several campus officials pointed out that unaddressed hunger and homelessness ultimately prevents students from staying in college and graduating, leaving them without the real solution – a college degree – that could help them permanently climb out of poverty.

"We need to meet their needs, if we want them to succeed," Mr. Santiago said. "Otherwise, it's just a revolving door."

## SERVICE WITH A SMILE



**ABOVE:** Fitchburg State University freshman Ashley Perez smiles as she helps fill bags with the ingredients for minestrone soup in the gym at the university's Recreation Center on Tuesday morning for the area's needy. This project is sponsored by the United Way of North Central Mass. and the university and is part of freshmen orientation. All of the ingredients for the soups are brought by "The Outreach Program." The ingredients for the soup are pasta, pinto beans, soy beans, dehydrated vegetables and red sauce. **See a slide show at [sentinelandenterprise.com](http://sentinelandenterprise.com).**

**RIGHT:** Sophomore Mariah Vanderveer helps keep track of the number of bags before they are boxed up during the event.



# FSU doesn't want pot on its 'doorstep'

By Elizabeth Dobbins

[edobbins@sentinelandenterprise.com](mailto:edobbins@sentinelandenterprise.com)

FITCHBURG — Should retail marijuana be sold on Main Street? Not so fast, says Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus.

In a letter sent to City Councilors on Friday, Lapidus outlined the university's concerns with a proposed zoning ordinance that would allow non-medical marijuana retailers to open on Main Street east of Blossom Street.

"While the Commonwealth has approved recreational use of marijuana and the city is rightly being deliberate in its determining where retail outlets will be allowed, we do not wish to see the eastern edge of Main Street — the doorstep of our campus — included in this district," he wrote.

Councilors have revised the proposed zoning ordinance several times this spring. The current version would allow shops, for the most part, to open on both sides of Main Street from Blossom to Lunenburg Street.

However, the north side of Main Street from Snow Street to Willow Street is not zoned as a commercial business district even though businesses are located in this area, according to Executive Director of Community Development Tom Skwierawski. The same is true for North Street between Main Street and Pearl Street.

Skwierawski said it's unclear whether the current proposal would also allow marijuana retailers to locate in these areas.

Regardless, Lapidus has already expressed his stance on the issue, which calls for keeping these retailers away from campus.

"The campus and the city have worked hard to revitalize the North Street corridor and to create a



Fitchburg State Univ. President Richard Lapidus

# FSU president wants to keep marijuana off school's 'doorstep'

**LAPIDUS**/From Page 1

more family-friendly feel,” he wrote in the letter. “As thousands of students and their parents travel this route on a regular basis, the addition of a retail marijuana shop would not enhance perceptions of the area and could be detrimental to enrollment.”

Even though recreational marijuana is legal in Massachusetts, Lapidus said the substance will not be allowed at the univer-

sity, because it is still federally illegal.

In his letter he praised the city's revitalization efforts and the college's collaboration with the city, but said the current proposed district would be “ill-advised.”

“It will always be easier to add locations once the implications of them are assessed,” he wrote. “Alternatively, the removal of locations that result in unanticipated

quences will be far more difficult to address.”

Mayor Stephen DiNatale said he hopes City Council will weigh the university's concerns, which he said he shares.

“I would have concerns with that type of business in the college neighborhood,” he said.

City Council is expected to next discuss the ordinance Tuesday night.

*Follow Elizabeth Dobbins on Twitter @DobbinsSentinel*



Catherine Canney, Fitchburg State University associate vice president for academic affairs, received the Leadership Award from the Massachusetts National Network of Women Leaders.

COURTESY PHOTO

## FSU's Canney honored for leadership

FITCHBURG — Catherine Canney, Fitchburg State University associate vice president for academic affairs, received the Leadership Award from the Massachusetts National Network of Women Leaders in recognition of her efforts to support women in higher education.

Canney has worked at Fitchburg State for more than 30 years, beginning as a staff assistant and coordinator of special projects up to more senior roles, including graduate and continuing education program dean.

The Leadership Award is presented to a woman leader in higher education who has significantly promoted women in the field.

The awardee exemplifies the principles of the American Council on Education National Network: IDEALS, which stands for identify, develop, encourage, advance, link and support women to advance their careers in higher education.

“Cathy demonstrates her commitment to the advancement of women

through the example she provides every day as a female leader who is respected on campus for her knowledge, her ability to follow through and successfully implement new ideas, new processes, and programs, coupled with her passion for student service and making access to quality education a priority for the university,” Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus said in his letter nominating Canney for the accolade.

“While serving as a role model to men and women alike at the university, Cathy has always made time to support the advancement of other women through mentorship and taking the time to listen, counsel and advise.”

Among the testimonials offered by other women at Fitchburg State in nominating Canney for recognition were:

• “I am a better person, educator, mentor, advisor and women for having worked beside her,” said Director of Extended Campus & Professional Studies Lisa Moison. “It is my

that my colleagues and I, in some small way, can pass on her wisdom and guidance to the next generation of emerging leaders at Fitchburg State University.”

• “She takes 100 percent responsibility on projects and sees them through to successful completion,” said Director of Marketing Kelly Norris. “She is committed to constant self-improvement and shares learned knowledge with her colleagues. She empowers other women, and has empowered me in my career for over 20 years.”

• “She has always encouraged me and other women to raise our sights, act with confidence, and thoughtfully advocate for ourselves,” said Director of Special Projects Jessica Augat. “This is a woman who goes out of her way to support other women. She takes the time, that in many cases she truly doesn't have, to counsel.”

• “She constantly strives to produce exceptional and innovative results in all areas of her work and inspires those around her to do the

same,” said Director of the Grant Center Karen Frank Mays. “Cathy is an extraordinary role model for all of us who work with her.”

Canney completed her master's degree at Fitchburg State in educational leadership and management and her doctorate in higher education administration at New England College, both while working full-time at the university.

Among the major initiatives she has spearheaded at Fitchburg State are the strategic vision and development of online programs; partnerships to expand general collaboration and continuing education; accreditation review; and leading innovative and regional approaches to early college high school programming.

“We cannot imagine a more deserving person for this award,” Lapidus said. “Cathy is a role model, someone who has progressively worked her way into increasing levels of responsibility while encouraging and supporting others to advance along the way.”

# 25 Investigates: Mass. universities struggle to meet mental health demands

---

The scope of mental health treatment at colleges and universities in Massachusetts varies widely from institution to institution, leaving some on-campus counseling centers unequipped to handle rising demand from struggling students, 25 Investigates found.

25 Investigates contacted 50 schools statewide over the course of three months, and 19 of them -- including major institutions like Harvard -- provided no response.

The survey, which also gathered information from university websites, shows big differences in how many counselors each school keeps on staff, as well as other variations that some students say are keeping them from getting the help they need.

A report from the Center for Collegiate Mental Health at Penn State shows demand for counseling services at colleges shot up 30 to 40 percent from 2010 to 2015, far outpacing enrollment, which rose only 5 percent in that time period.

“Rapidly rising demand, paired with risk and flat funding, seem to be making it increasingly difficult for counseling centers to maintain treatment capacity for students who need it,” [the report says](#).

The problem is especially grave considering the fact 1,400 college students died by suicide in the U.S. in 2016, as noted in [a recent presentation to the UMass Board of Trustees](#).

Counseling centers deal with the deluge of students in different ways, according to the CCMH report. Some have long waits for initial appointments or impose weeks-long intervals between counseling sessions, with centers in Massachusetts among them.

## REACHING OUT FOR HELP -- AND NOT FINDING IT

Kavita Singh, 22, was in her second year at Northeastern when she said she started isolating herself, skipping class, and questioning her very existence.

“I didn’t know how to deal with it, so I went to the university,” said Singh.

Singh said she has an anxiety disorder, and getting help from Northeastern’s University Health and Counseling Services was a struggle.

“On average, each time I called them to schedule an appointment, it would take a month,” she said. “It was only until I was a threat to myself that the university expressed concern for me.”

Northeastern did not cut mental health services on campus. Fitchburg State University - Board of Trustees - Agenda - Tuesday September 11, 2018 at 8:00 AM

A spokesperson confirmed the school has 15 mental health professionals on staff, meaning there is one counselor for about every 1,700 students, according to the school's most recent enrollment numbers.

The spokesperson also said Northeastern does not limit the amount of counseling sessions a student can have, which is not true at other institutions in Massachusetts.

The review by 25 Investigates found six schools in the state place specific caps on the number of counseling sessions available to students. Clark University decided to cap students at six sessions per semester after demand for services soared by almost 50 percent between 2013 and 2015, according to Clark's counseling center's website.

"While we are glad that students are utilizing our services more for help, we were finding that we couldn't accommodate everyone in a timely manner. So we had to make a decision – have people wait a long time to get in or limit the frequency of their sessions," the website says.

Other colleges and universities have no specific session limit but offer "brief" or "short-term" counseling. Several schools in both categories, including Clark, say there are exceptions to these rules.

## **DEALING WITH THE "TSUNAMI"**

Dr. Chris Flynn is the head of Virginia Tech's counseling center and the president of the International Association of Counseling Services, an organization that sets standards for college centers and accredits about 200 of them.

"We're sort of still in the middle of this -- what feels like a tsunami," he said, describing the huge surge in demand for counseling appointments. "But (it's) a positive thing. It's a great thing that students are seeking out counseling services on a college campus."

And when it comes to dealing with the tsunami, he said, there is no one solution for every school.

"At what point do you have adequate services to serve every student that may attend your university?" said Flynn.

In Massachusetts, Fitchburg State University's counseling center isn't closing its doors to the tsunami -- it's leaving them open for as long as possible, offering unlimited free counseling to all students.

Dr. Robert Hynes has been in charge there for 17 years, and he said more students are coming in for help than ever before.

Fitchburg State University - Board of Trustees - Agenda - Tuesday September 11, 2018 at 8:00 AM  
"I don't think any increase," said Hynes, who theorized reduced stigma and greater access to counseling before people go to college could partly explain why more students are seeking out help on campus.

Hynes called unlimited counseling a way to keep students in school, especially for the students who cannot afford mental health care off campus.

"Those students tend to do an awful lot better when we can see them 10 times a year, 15 times a year, versus other models where you see them maybe 5 or 6 sessions and then you're forced to make a referral out," said Hynes. "If we did not engage in counseling with our students, as well as other student support services, then we would have a fairly substantial proportion of students who would not be successful here."

Even if one of Hynes' students could pay for an outside counselor, he said, the City of Fitchburg has far fewer mental health providers than Boston.

One of the challenges of Hynes' job is to get in touch with the students who may never come to the counseling center on their own, which is why he leads gatekeeper trainings.

Gatekeepers are people who come into contact with students every day, such as resident assistants and other university staff members. The training teaches them about the warning signs of suicide and simple interventions they can make.

"The most acutely at risk people in our community may never knock on the door of a mental health professional or a medical health professional or somebody that can help," Hynes said. "What we need are lots of deputies out there."

Professors make up one group that comes into contact with students daily, and many schools have trainings available for them, but only Massachusetts Maritime Academy told 25 Investigates that training is mandatory.

## **A LACK OF CARE, AND THE CONSEQUENCES**

Kavita Singh eventually got the help she needed from an outside counselor. Now, she's part of a student group advocating for more counselors at Northeastern and pressing the university to take more responsibility for the mental health of its students.

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court recently found MIT was not negligent in the 2009 suicide of a grad student, but said universities do have a responsibility to prevent suicides in some cases.

Providing accessible mental health services is part of the deal universities make with their paying students, Singh said.

"Students deserve care," she said. "They're spending their money. Their tuition is 60 thousand dollars a year. It shouldn't be hard for the school to provide."



# Burke takes reins as AD for Falcons

Matthew J. Burke hopes to take Falcons athletics to the next level as the new athletic director at Fitchburg State University.

Burke comes to Fitchburg State after a lengthy tenure at Mount Ida College, another NCAA Division III program.

“My philosophy is grounded in what Division III is all about,” he said. “The number one priority is to be a student and earn a degree.

I also believe that athletics provides a lot of valuable life lessons. I want every student-athlete to represent the department with pride, wherever they are.”



Matthew J. Burke

Burke was hired following the retirement of long-time athletic director Sue Lauder, whose 22-year tenure with the Falcons included being named the DIII Under Armour Athletic Director of the Year in 2017. That honor was bestowed in recognition of Lauder’s efforts to enhance athletics and recreation opportunities at the university, including the addition of women’s varsity lacrosse and volleyball.

“I am excited about the leadership and vision that Matt Burke will bring to Falcon athletics,” said Vice President for Student Affairs Laura Bayless. “Sue Lauder’s retirement left big shoes to fill, and I know that Matt’s strong experience has prepared him well to lead our athletic department to new heights.”

Burke’s career at Mount Ida College dates to 1998, including the last seven years as executive director of athletics. His time there has seen an expansion of athletic facilities and addition of new varsity sports.

At Fitchburg State, Burke said he hopes to support the university’s student-athletes with similar passion.

“I believe in an individualized approach, and I want to see improvement for students academically as well as on the field,” he said.

Burke earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Sport Management from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and received his master’s in Business Administration.

# DOING THEIR CIVIC DAYS DUTY IN FITCHBURG



This years Civic's Days in Fitchburg raised \$39,000 that was given to the city by many company sponsors. Holding the \$39,000 check is Diane Burnette and Mayor Stephen DiNatale, on left. With them holding checks for the amounts they gave are, from left, Mount Wachusett Community College Vice President Lea Ann Scales, Melissa Kuehl with Rollstone Bank, Joe Bowen the Chairman of the Fitchburg Cultural Council, Fidelity Bank Personal Banker Kaitlyn Lillie, Fitchburg Redevelopment Authority Board Member Jim Hohman and Board Chairman Tom Donnelly and Fitchburg State University Vice President of Student Affairs Laura Bayless.



The 122nd annual Fitchburg State University Commencement was held on Saturday in the university's Recreation Center. Graduates Samantha Eberlin of Leominster, left, and Corinne Desimone of Dennis take a picture before the ceremony started. **See photo slideshow at [www.sentinelandenterprise.com](http://www.sentinelandenterprise.com).**

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE/JOHN LOVE

# After years of hard work, FSU Class of 2018 graduates ready for the real world

By Peter Jasinski  
[pjasinski@sentinelandenterprise.com](mailto:pjasinski@sentinelandenterprise.com)

FITCHBURG — Diplomas in hand, more than 600 undergraduate students walked across Fitchburg State University's stage Saturday and into a world that university President Richard Lapidus referred to in his commencement address as "increasingly charged and strained."

However, few of the university's most recent graduating students seemed very troubled by what waited for them on the other side of the stage.

"As a shy, soft-spoken student who

lacked confidence, I would have never had the courage four years ago to speak here today had I not taken chances during my undergraduate career," said mathematics student Kristin Ann Windoloski in her valedictory speech. "Look at us now. Our personal growth before our first and last day here are evident. We are wise, stronger, and more confident."

Windoloski was joined by FSU faculty and alumni in reminding graduates that they had the keys to succeed in a world outside of college. For Lapidus, it was an opportunity to

embody the qualities of empathy, kindness, and moral courage as they leave Fitchburg State.

"Moral courage is about the willingness to be challenged by adversity, the acceptance of uncertain outcomes and the strength in the conviction of your beliefs," he said. "In the end, we must all realize that life is about choices and the willingness to take risk."

The risks alluded to by Lapidus were something retired brigadier general and



The 122nd annual Fitchburg State University Commencement was held on Saturday. Nathan Sidney Goldman from Leominster, left, and Ryan Patrick Hill from Billerica check out their diplomas. SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE/JOHN LOVE

# FSU grads excited for future

**GRADS/**From Page 1

Fitchburg State University alumnus Frederick Henry said the class of 2018 is prepared to take on, just as the school had prepared him for success more than 30 years ago.

“Like some of you, I came to this great institution with no real idea of what I wanted to be or what degree program I wanted to pursue. However, I left this institution with a Falcon spirit and ready to start my journey,” Henry said in his address

to students. “I left this institution wise, as I know all of you will do today.”

In recognition of his decades of service in the U.S. Army and accomplishments in the private sector, Henry was awarded an honorary doctorate of letters during Saturday’s ceremony.

Mayor Stephen DiNatale, another alumnus, thanked students for their time spent in Fitchburg.

“I have no doubt our community has been Powered by BoardOnTrack er... contributions and I wish

that you continue to have an impact on its bright future,” he said.

As glad as he was to now have his degree, Ethan Comrie, a criminal justice student from Weymouth, said he was leaving Fitchburg with mixed emotions.

“It’s bittersweet,” he said. “I am happy it’s over, but I don’t want to leave. It’s another home for me here.”

Follow Peter Jasinski on Twitter @PeterJasinski52 of 57  
ski53

## FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY GRADUATION

# Brigadier general's order: Make good choices

By Paula J. Owen  
Correspondent

FITCHBURG – The rain and unseasonably cold temperatures Saturday may have moved Fitchburg State University's commencement exercises indoors, but it didn't dampen the excitement of graduates and those celebrating their special moment with them in the packed Athletics and Recreation Center.

Approximately 600 students graduated Saturday.

The commencement address was given by retired U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Frederick A. Henry, a 1984 FSU graduate.

"In 1984, my graduation served as a pivotal moment for me, as your graduation will serve as a defining moment for you," Gen. Henry said. "When I sat in your seat, I did not

have all the answers and I was nervous about how the next chapter would unfold."

He said looking back, there was nothing special about what he did.

"I just positioned myself to take advantage of opportunities I was presented," he said. "Like me, each of you will be presented with choices. What you do with the choices presented to you will shape your own individual stories and legacy."

Coming from "modest means" growing up in Cambridge, he said he aspired to be a professional tennis player, not making higher education a priority, but knowing he wanted a life beyond the limitations of his community.

However, his high school counselor encouraged him not to give up on going to college.

"So, when I arrived at Fitchburg State I was looking for a reason to say 'no' to the college experience," he said. "But, Fitchburg helped me say 'yes.' I did not choose Fitchburg State. Fitchburg State chose me. (FSU) welcomed me and provided me with the academic support I needed to gain confidence as a college student."

He said he found a sanctuary at FSU that cultivated his intellectual curiosity and the school provided him with opportunities to discover his leadership potential.

He would join the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) at FSU and several weeks later, head to Fort Knox, Kentucky, for ROTC basic training that was the

See FSU, B4



Retired Brig. Gen. Frederick Henry gives the commencement address during the 122nd commencement ceremony at Fitchburg State University Saturday. View a photo gallery at telegram.com. [T&G STAFF/ASHLEY GREEN]

## FSU

From Page B3

beginning of his 30-year military career.

"That goes to show you that it doesn't matter your gender, ethnicity or social status. When you start your journey just keep it moving and believe in yourself and never let anyone derail your dream," he told the graduates.

"Never forget that you are a Fitchburg State University Falcon," he added. "The Falcon is often symbolized for its supreme focus, speed, strategic vision and fearless character. These are attributes that were engrained in you here at (FSU) and will be cultivated during your journey long after this milestone moment."

Gen. Henry received an honorary degree during the ceremony from FSU President Richard S. Lapidus who also spoke at the ceremony. [Powered by BoardOnTrack](#)



**NEW BEGINNINGS:** Robby Denaud, from Haiti, who now lives in Boston, joins the crowd of immigrants take the oath of citizenship during a naturalization ceremony at Fitchburg State's Weston Auditorium Friday. **See slide show at [sentinelandenterprise.com](http://sentinelandenterprise.com).**

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE PHOTOS / JOHN LOVE

# With every oath, a dream

## Immigrants from 54 nations celebrate citizenship at FSU ceremony

By Elizabeth Dobbins  
[edobbins@sentinelandenterprise.com](mailto:edobbins@sentinelandenterprise.com)

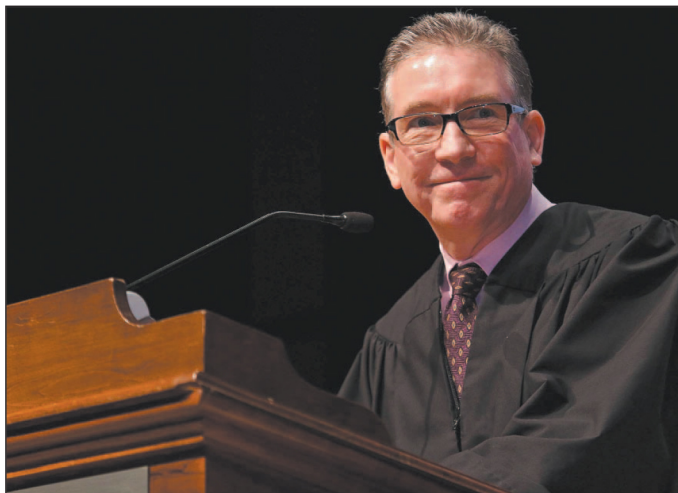
**F**ITCHBURG — Some came for love. Others came for a new life.

In total, 206 people became naturalized U.S. citizens Friday during a ceremony at Fitchburg State University.

The newly minted Americans come from 54 nations and now live in 35 communities across the state.

Marcos Ferreira flexed with his certificate for a commemorative photo after the ceremony.

Ferreira came to the United States from Brazil when he was 19 years old



U.S. District Court Judge David Hennessey addresses the new citizens and the crowd.

interested in going to college and learning a new language. From the time he fi

reira, now 31, to become a U.S. citizen.

The journey was also long for Lawrence resident Benita Kalala, who immigrated from the Democratic Republic of Congo as an 11-year-old refugee fleeing war.

"It's been a long time. Since I was very young," she said. "Like, I'm 23 right now and since I was 5 it's been a hustle."

Oluwatomi Keshinro was surrounded by family as she became a U.S. Citizen. Originally from Nigeria, she moved to the United States in 2013 to be with her husband Rilwan Keshinro.

"When the snail moves,



Rupesh Kotapati, from India, left, who now lives in Westford, takes the oath of citizenship during a naturalization ceremony at Fitchburg State's Weston Auditorium Friday. At right, Wern Sepasouk, from Laos, who also lives in Westford, shares the moment.



## Immigrants from 54 nations celebrate new horizons

**CITIZENS/**From Page 1

the shell comes along," her husband said, describing how the two eventually made the international

move together.

Love also brought Chris Stewart and Josie Stewart, who both received their certificate Friday, to the United States.

Though Chris Stewart is from the United Kingdom and Josie Stewart is from Brazil, they met in Switzerland.

Citizenship will allow

them to get more involved in their community and provide more opportunities for their 12-year-old and 9-year-old children, they said.

Jessica Castillo and her mother Rosa Castro immigrated from the Dominican Republic, one of the most well represented countries at the ceremony.

Now that both are citizens Castillo's next goal is to attend college to study journalism.

Castillo's reason for the move was simple: to seek "a better life."

Follow Elizabeth Dobbins on Twitter @DobbinsSentinel.



Fitchburg Mayor Stephen DiNatale addresses the new citizens.



Vandy Ngeth, from Cambodia, who now lives in Lowell, and Jeanne D'arc Kanyange, from the Congo, who also now lives in Lowell, take the oath.

## Court vacates Kennedy cousin Skakel's conviction in 1975 killing of Conn. girl

**By Dave Collins**  
Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. — In a stunning reversal, the Connecticut Supreme Court on Friday overturned Kennedy cousin Michael Skakel's murder conviction in the 1975 bludgeoning death of a girl in wealthy Greenwich.

The high court issued a 4-3 ruling that Skakel's trial attorney failed to present evidence of an alibi. The same court in December 2016 had reinstated Skakel's conviction after a lower court ordered a new trial, citing mistakes by the trial attorney, Mickey Sherman.

It wasn't immediately clear if prosecutors will subject Skakel to a new trial. A spokesman for Chief State's Attorney Kevin Kane said prosecutors were reviewing the new ruling. He declined further comment.

Skakel, a nephew of Robert F. Kennedy's widow, Ethel Kennedy, was convicted of murder in 2002 in the death of Martha Moxley in 1975 when they were teenagers. He was sentenced to 20 years to life in prison, but was freed on \$1.2 million bail after serving 11 years behind bars when the lower court overturned his murder conviction in 2013.



Michael Skakel leaves the state Supreme Court after his hearing in Hartford, Conn., in February 2016.

AP FILE PHOTO

The case has drawn international attention because of the Kennedy name, Skakel's rich family, numerous theories about who killed Moxley and the brutal way in which she died. Several other people, including Skakel's brother Tommy Skakel, have been mentioned as possible killers.

The slaying took place in the exclusive Bell Haven section of Greenwich where Martha and Skakel were neighbors. At trial, prosecutors said Skakel was angry with Martha because she had spurned his advances while having a sexual liaison with his brother Tommy.

Skakel's appellate lawyer, Hubert Santos, had asked the Supreme Court to reconsider its

2016 ruling, resulting in Friday's decision.

"We're elated that our argument was vindicated," Santos said Friday. "It was a good decision because it was spot on the law."

Santos argued that Sherman made poor decisions, including not focusing on Skakel's brother as a possible suspect and failing to attempt to contact an alibi witness. Santos said Skakel was several miles away from the crime scene on Oct. 30, 1975 watching a Monty Python movie with friends when Moxley was bludgeoned with a golf club.

Santos also has said there was no physical evidence or eyewitnesses linking Skakel to the killing.

# Library, FSU present 'Piece of My Heart'

FITCHBURG — “A Piece of My Heart,” the powerful, true story of six women (five nurses and a country singer) sent to Vietnam, reveals their struggles to make sense of the war.

Fitchburg Public Library, in collaboration with Fitchburg State University, presents two free dramatic readings — at 3 p.m., on Sunday, July 8, and at 7 p.m., on Monday, July 9, at the library, 610 Main St.

The production is produced in honor of all Vietnam veterans and The

Wall that Heals replica that will be at Crocker Field from July 12-15.

The script, written by Shirley Lauro in 1991, is based on the 1985 book, “A Piece of My Heart: The stories of 26 American women who served in Vietnam.”

Beyond the shared experiences of the Vietnam veterans, the book has an additional local component: One of the nurses in the book is Donna Peck who lives in Westminster.

The production is directed by Fitchburg  
S Powered by BoardOnTrack

Kelly Stowell. The actors are FSU alumni Amy DuMar-DuBois, Shani Farrell, Lindsay Flathers-Friend, Lisa Nguyen and Angela Renzi, as well as current FSU students Shani Farrell and Natalie Scott. Nick Wakely plays the American men who appear in the stories.

The six women share their thoughts, feelings and emotions, beginning with how they came to be in the service, their dedication to service, and the reaction they received when they returned to the U.S. 56 of 57



# COMMENTARY

AS I SEE IT

## The road from Reagan to Trump: Selecting Justice Kennedy's successor

By Paul I. Weizer

Picture the scene. The American people elected a president who ran as a hard-line conservative, more so than any president elected in a generation. Following his victory, he sought to remake the system by reducing the size of government, cutting regulations, and championing a massive tax cut. A believer in supply side economics, this president believed that by cutting taxes on the wealthy, the money would trickle down to middle class and poorer Americans. The tax cuts would create massive deficits but were promised to pay for themselves. This was 1980, but also applies to 2018.

The Reagan years provide several interesting parallels to the current situation regarding the Supreme Court. Just as with President Trump, President Reagan was able, in his first year in office, to reward his supporters with a conservative appointment to the Supreme Court in the form of Sandra Day O'Connor. However, our stories parallel again with the retirement of another Republican appointee, Justice Anthony Kennedy.

As we look back on Kennedy's career, it is interesting to recall that Kennedy was not Reagan's first choice. During the period between the appointment of O'Connor in 1981 and the two picks which would follow, the Federalist Society rose to prominence as a pipeline for conservative legal talent in Republican administrations. Among the early leaders of this movement, using "original intent" to interpret the Constitution, were the next two Reagan nominees, Antonin Scalia and then Robert Bork. During the campaign in 2016, President Trump publicly stated that all of his judicial nominees would be picked by the Federalist Society. He went so far as to release a list of potential nominees which is posted on the White House website: [bit.ly/TrumpListing](http://bit.ly/TrumpListing). Trump's first appointee, Neil



Gorsuch, is a Federalist Society member. Undoubtedly, his next choice will be as well. By making ideological purity the requirement for judicial considerations, it is unlikely there could be another Sandra Day O'Connor or Anthony Kennedy.

In 1987, Reagan first nominated Judge Robert Bork to fill the vacancy of retiring Justice Lewis Powell. However, many justices of that era rose above party once on the bench, often disappointing the presidents who nominated them. Reagan's first two appointments (O'Connor and Antonin Scalia) were ideological matches for their predecessors. Each was confirmed without a single vote in opposition.

Powell's retirement would be different, as the hard-line Bork would have shifted the court after Powell's service as an open-minded centrist. The Bork hearings were a spectacle.

Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy famously stated that "In Robert Bork's America, women would be forced into back-alley abortions, blacks would sit at segregated lunch counters, rogue police could break down citizens' doors in midnight raids, school-children could not be taught about evolution, writers and artists could be censored at the whim of the Government, and the doors of the Federal courts would be shut on the fingers of millions of citizens." In the end, his nomination was defeated 58-42.

Reagan next nominated former Harvard Law Professor and federal Judge Douglas Ginsburg. However, Ginsburg's past marijuana use was enough to withdraw his name from consideration at that time.

Which brings us to Anthony Kennedy. In 1988, he was confirmed unanimously. In his 30 years

predominantly conservative, but was a centrist by today's standards, often the swing vote in 5-4 decisions. Though he most often voted with the conservatives, he diverged in a few areas of jurisprudence and changed laws in areas including homosexual rights and abortion.

Kennedy's opinion in the 1996 case *Romer v. Evans* struck down a Colorado constitutional amendment that denied legal protection to homosexuals. His opinion in 2003's *Lawrence v. Texas* overturned prior precedent and prohibited states from banning homosexual relations.

Most recently, Kennedy provided the decisive vote in recognizing same sex marriage under the Constitution. Writing in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, Kennedy concluded:

"No union is more profound than marriage, for it embodies the highest ideals of love, fidelity,

devotion, sacrifice, and family. In forming a marital union, two people become something greater than once they were. As some of the petitioners in these cases demonstrate, marriage embodies a love that may endure even past death. It would misunderstand these men and women to say they disrespect the idea of marriage. Their plea is that they do respect it, respect it so deeply that they seek to find its fulfillment for themselves. Their hope is not to be condemned to live in loneliness, excluded from one of civilization's oldest institutions. They ask for equal dignity in the eyes of the law. The Constitution grants them that right."

In abortion cases, Kennedy was a reliable conservative vote, with one glaring exception. In 1992, the court took a challenge to Pennsylvania's abortion laws. This was the first such challenge since Clarence Thomas replaced civil rights icon Thurgood Marshall on the bench. Many commentators at the time predicted that the court would overturn *Roe v. Wade* and remove constitutional protection from abortion. However, this result was not to be. In a rare joint opinion, Kennedy joined Justices O'Connor and Souter in saving *Roe*. Writing that overturning *Roe* would undermine public confidence in the ability of judges to be neutral arbiters of the law, the joint opinion held that the court's very legitimacy was at stake.

These decisions will form the legacy of Anthony Kennedy's judicial career. But, they are also very much at risk given a Trump appointment. No doubt, these issues are where the battle lines will be drawn in the upcoming confirmation battle.

*Paul I. Weizer, Ph.D., of Leominster, is a professor of political science at Fitchburg State University. He has written extensively on the Supreme Court and his books include The Opinions of Justice Antonin Scalia: The Caustic Conservative (2004).* 57 of 57