



Fitchburg State University

Board of Trustees

Amended on September 16, 2020 at 11:14 AM EDT

Date and Time

Tuesday September 15, 2020 at 8:00 AM EDT

Location

This meeting will be held remotely.

Notice of a meeting of the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees on Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 8:00 a.m.

This meeting will be held via teleconference as approved by Governor Baker.

For public comments dial (when announced in the meeting): 978.665.3698

Public streaming: <https://stream.meet.google.com/stream/b45ca7d0-e6cb-4632-9ca8-3fe81638a9fb>

Agenda

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
I. Opening Items			8:00 AM
Opening Items			
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 June 29, 2020 Meeting - VOTE (01-20/21)	Approve Minutes		1 m
Approve minutes for Board of Trustees on June 29, 2020			
II. President's Assessment and Goals			8:06 AM
A. President's Goal Performance 2019-2020 Academic Year	Discuss		8 m
B. Accept the President's Goal Assessment for AY2019-2020- VOTE (02-20/21)	Vote		1 m
C. President's Goals AY2020-2021	Discuss		8 m
D. Accept the President's Goals for AY2020-2021 - VOTE (03-20/21)	Vote		1 m

III. Investment Account Balances		8:24 AM
A. University Investment Market Value	FYI	5 m
IV. Notifications		8:29 AM
A. Personnel Actions (N01-20/21)	FYI	1 m
V. Student Trustee Report		8:30 AM
A. Steven Olson will provide the Student Trustee Report		5 m
VI. Chair's Report		8:35 AM
A. Committee Assignments	FYI	5 m
VII. President's Report		8:40 AM
A. Opening of the university	FYI	10 m
B. Courageous Conversations/Social Justice	FYI	5 m
C. Health Services	FYI	5 m
D. Strategic Planning	FYI	5 m
E. Conflict of Interest	FYI	3 m
F. News Articles	FYI	1 m
VIII. Closing Items		9:09 AM
A. Adjourn Meeting	Vote	1 m

Cover Sheet

Approve Minutes from the June 29, 2020 Meeting - VOTE (01-20/21)

Section: I. Opening Items
Item: D. Approve Minutes from the June 29, 2020 Meeting - VOTE (01-20/21)
Purpose: Approve Minutes
Submitted by:
Related Material: Minutes for Board of Trustees on June 29, 2020
VOTE Minutes.pdf

APPROVED



Fitchburg State University

Minutes

Board of Trustees

Date and Time

Monday June 29, 2020 at 8:30 AM

Location

This will be a remote meeting.

Notice of a meeting of the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees

Monday, June 29, 2020 at 8:30 a.m. This meeting will be held via teleconference as approved by Governor Baker.

For public comments dial (when announced in the meeting): 978.665.3698

Public streaming: <https://stream.meet.google.com/stream/21e2f9f5-03a8-4fa7-82a4-35415739ed06>

Trustees Present

A. Clementi (remote), C. Aneke (remote), C. Stimpson (remote), D. Irving (remote), D. Phillips (remote), F. O'Donnell (remote), L. Barrieau (remote)

Trustees Absent

D. Nieto, D. Tiernan, M. Nicholson

Guests Present

A. Cardelle (remote), A. Krishnamurthy (remote), Campus Community (remote), G. Doiron (remote), G. Doiron (remote), G. Feckley (remote), J. Bry (remote), Members of Executive Cabinet (remote), R. Lapidus (remote), S. Swartz (remote)

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 Monday Jun 29, 2020 @ 8:32 AM.

C. Public Comments

A. Krishnamurthy, MSCA Chapter President, read a prepared statement. She urged the board to not consider furloughs. The Board will need to work with the Unions which can be a lengthy process. She suggested offering retirement incentives instead, for furloughs damage institutions. Adding furloughs to the budget is not prudent.

G. Feckley, AFSCME Union Steward, spoke on behalf of the ASFCME employees. She was surprised that furloughs are being discussed. Our members are very dedicated to the University. She noted during the months that many were working remotely, and on campus, under difficult conditions, kept the University operating. She expressed her concerns, and said the Board needs to work with the Unions. She requests that furloughs be excluded from the budget.

A returning student stated that the Technology Fee is too high. He asked the board to vote against all fee increases.

D. Approve Minutes from the Board of Trustees June 10, 2020 - VOTE (25-19/20)

D. Phillips made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees on 06-10-20.

L. Barrieau seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

D. Nieto Absent
D. Phillips Aye
L. Barrieau Aye
M. Nicholson Absent
A. Clementi Aye
F. O'Donnell Aye
C. Aneke Aye
C. Stimpson Aye
D. Irving Aye
D. Tiernan Absent

E. Approval of June 10, 2020 Executive Session Minutes - VOTE (32-19/20)

D. Phillips made a motion to approve the minutes from approve the June 10, 2020 Executive Session Minutes.

A. Clementi seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

D. Nieto Absent
D. Phillips Aye
A. Clementi Aye
D. Irving Aye
M. Nicholson Absent
C. Aneke Aye
C. Stimpson Aye
L. Barrieau Aye
F. O'Donnell Aye
D. Tiernan Absent

II. Finance and Administration Committee

A. FY2021 Budget Narrative

D. Irving discussed the budget narrative. He said the team has done a great job putting the budget together.

The president provided a general overview of the budget. He thanked Jay Bry and his team, Mary Beth McKenzie, Christian Estrella, and Carin Bullis. He indicated that they had worked hard to refine and anticipate the complicated variables during this time period so that a realistic possible budget could be presented. The rationale for presenting the budget at this late date is because of the tremendous volatility and unknowns that exist. It was suggested that if the budget had been presented earlier, a significant change might have required a complete revision. It was noted that this possibility still exists.

The president highlighted three variables that have significant impact on our financial stability. First, is the state appropriation which is currently unknown. The state currently does not have a budget. A place holder was used in this budget with a reduction of 10% relative to last year's appropriation. Second, enrollment is currently unknown, although it is anticipated to be down as students are unsure what impact the pandemic will have on the ability of the institution to deliver academic content and support services. Third, are the unknown occupancy numbers connected with residence life and associated food service.

The president next discussed the residence hall debt. He presented information regarding debt restructuring from the Massachusetts State College Building Authority (MSCBA). A significant portion of debt will be deferred in FY21 and the fall of FY22. This relief will be spread across future time periods resulting in slightly higher payments in later years. The president reminded the board that regardless of the number of students in the Residence Halls, the university is always responsible for covering its full debt load each year.

Student enrollment was next discussed. The president indicated that the date of student deposits had been pushed back and that the university will accept every qualified student up until the first day of classes. Currently, he noted, that first-time student enrollment was relatively flat and transfer enrollment was down. He also reported that the returning student population is down.

He concluded that the budget presented is an educated guess and that there was still much uncertainty. He reinforced the broad-based approach to cost mitigation, including the consideration of furloughs, as a means of reducing a significant deficit in the budget. He cautioned about the universities ability to sustain successive allocations from financial reserves and the long-term dangers associated with doing so.

D. Phillips wanted the board to draw their attention to the FY18 - FY20 budgets and the pre-COVID budget. She reported that the Finance Committee met and held an extremely lengthy meeting. She stated that the finance team did an amazing job making assumptions on the best information from the Commonwealth and predicting what the next year will look like. The Finance Committee did vote to recommend to the Board the budget which includes a small increase to the technology fee. She noted that there is no other alternative at the Board's disposal. This is a crucial budget and we need to be conservative this fiscal year to remain financially healthy going forward.

J. Bry highlighted the key lines on the budget sheet. He provided details on operational expenses, and the Massachusetts Housing Authority's actions regarding the deferment of debt. He indicated that data indicated that the campus was already trending down with regard to student residence life. He mentioned that he understands the concerns with the Technology Fee increase, but noted if you look at total student fees, the institution will remain at the lowest or second to the lowest compared to our sister schools. He explained out-of-state tuition, accelerated programs and the GCE fee increase. He said the vast majority of the budget is full-time personnel. The only way to reduce this amount is a hiring freeze and furloughs. Departments have been asked to submit level funded budgets, no travel, and no food orders to reduce the expenses.

B. Budget Narrative Appendix

J. Bry discussed the Summary of Operating Funds sheet.

D. Phillips commended the work it took to make the budget presentation to the Board. She said every industry is going through a financial stress test.

There was vigorous discussion on fees, retirement packages, and enrollment as it relates to out-of-state tuition.

C. Aneke stated these are very challenging times for students and they are experiencing instability at home. She does not support the fee increases.

D. Irving explained how the institutions are funded and the constraints and challenges that exist of keeping the schools running. Our revenue coming in is not enough and the only way to balance the budget is by raising fees. He stated that it is a horrible system and we don't want to burden the students, but there are no alternatives.

C. Annual Operating Budgets FY18-FY21

They were discussed in detail.

D. Technology Fee Increase - VOTE (26-19/20)

C. Stimpson made a motion to approve the following technology fee increase, effective for the fall semester 2020: Technology Fee Day Undergraduate Technology Fee: \$75.00 per semester increase for FY2021. The new annual total will be \$500.00. GCE Undergraduate and Graduate Technology Fee: \$2.00 per credit increase for FY2021 for a total fee of \$9.00 per credit.

D. Phillips seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

C. Stimpson Aye
D. Tiernan Absent
F. O'Donnell Aye
D. Irving Aye
M. Nicholson Absent
C. Aneke No
D. Nieto Absent
L. Barrieau Aye
D. Phillips Aye

E. GCE Student Fee - VOTE (27-19/20)

D. Phillips made a motion to approve the following Graduate and Continuing Education fee increases, effective fall semester 2020: • An increase of \$11.00 per credit for the GCE undergraduate program for FY2021; the new total per credit fee will be \$319.00. • An increase of \$13.00 per credit for the GCE graduate program for FY2021; the new total per credit fee will be \$332.00.

C. Stimpson seconded the motion.

There was a brief discussion on the students that this fee increase effect. The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

D. Tiernan Absent
F. O'Donnell Aye
D. Irving Aye
L. Barrieau Aye
C. Stimpson Aye

M. Nicholson Absent
D. Nieto Absent
C. Aneke No
D. Phillips Aye

F. ALFA Fee - VOTE (28-19/20)

D. Phillips made a motion to approve the following fee increase, effective for the fall semester 2020: ALFA Program ALFA Program: an increase of \$10.00 per course for FY2021; the new per course fee will be \$40.00.

L. Barrieau seconded the motion.

Adult Learning in the Fitchburg Area (ALFA) is a Lifelong Learning Institute that offers non-credit daytime courses and special activities designed and implemented by the members of the ALFA in coordination with the professional staff at Fitchburg State. This fee increase will impact a small population of adult learners The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

C. Aneke Aye
F. O'Donnell Aye
D. Irving Aye
D. Nieto Absent
D. Tiernan Absent
M. Nicholson Absent
D. Phillips Aye
L. Barrieau Aye
C. Stimpson Aye

G. FY2021 Budget - VOTE (29-19/20)

D. Phillips made a motion to to approve the FY2021 Budget as presented by the President.

L. Barrieau seconded the motion.

D. Phillips reminded the Trustees that the fees are calculated within the budget numbers. Given we are not sure of the future, we may need to revisit the budget in fall. The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

L. Barrieau Aye
C. Aneke No
D. Nieto Absent
D. Phillips Aye
C. Stimpson Aye
F. O'Donnell Aye
D. Irving Aye
M. Nicholson Absent
D. Tiernan Absent

H. Roll Forward of Funds to FY2021 Budget - VOTE (30-19/20)

C. Stimpson made a motion to approve that ongoing capital projects roll forward into the FY2021 University Budget.

A. Clementi seconded the motion.

J. Bry explained the roll forward of funds, which is current budget construction projects, that any funding that was not expended, those funds can continue roll over into the next fiscal year. The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

D. Tiernan Absent
C. Stimpson Aye
A. Clementi Aye
D. Irving Aye
F. O'Donnell Aye
D. Phillips Aye

C. Aneke Aye
M. Nicholson Absent
D. Nieto Absent
L. Barrieau Aye

III. Slate of Officers

A. Slate of Officers - VOTE (31-19/20)

The chair discussed the slate of officers. For reasons of continuity and stability, the current slate of officers will remain in place and be revisited in the fall.

C. Stimpson made a motion to approve the following slate of officers: Chair —Donald Irving
Vice Chair — C. Deborah Phillips Clerk — Lynn Barrieau.

D. Phillips seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

D. Tiernan Absent
A. Clementi Aye
M. Nicholson Absent
D. Phillips Aye
F. O'Donnell Aye
D. Nieto Absent
D. Irving Aye
C. Stimpson Aye
L. Barrieau Aye
C. Aneke Aye

IV. Notifications

A. Personnel Actions (N08-19/20)

The personell actions were submitted for informational purposes.

V. Student Trustee Report

A. Crystal Aneke will provide the Student Trustee Report

C. Aneke read a prepared statement regarding the impact of COVID19. She stated minority groups have been especially impacted. The disparities should be noted. She does not support the increase in fees. She said the university needs to make an explicit guarantee to how these fees will be used. She discussed the racism taking place across the country. She urged everyone to listen, learn and speak up against racism. She stated that it was an honor to serve as a Trustee and she is very proud of her Fitchburg State University education.

The Board expressed their appreciation for the work C. Aneke performed as Student Trustee. She will do well in any endeavor she undertakes. They urged her to keep in touch with them and Fitchburg State.

VI. Chair's Report

A. Don Irving will provide the Chair's Report

D. Irving reported that the actions taken today are difficult and critical. He indicated that he thought that there is going to be some Higher Education consolidation in the future. He said if we keep drawing down from our reserves each year, noting that this year we dipped into it twice, it will be unsustainable. He thought this budget does what it needs to do and we must focus on the long-term. He is confident we will get through this extremely difficult time period in the institution's history, but it will not be easy.

B. Introduce new Student Trustee Steven Olson

D. Irving introduced and welcomed new Student Trustee Steven Olson from Lunenburg, MA. S. Olson said he is excited to serve under these unique circumstances. He will do his very best for his fellow students and for the school. He is looking forward to getting to work.

VII. President's Report

A. COVID-19 Update

The president welcomed Steven Olson and is looking forward to having him join us. He indicated that S. Olson would be sworn in prior to the first formal fall board meeting and would be given the equipment and resources to be a successful student trustee.

He next reported on COVID19. The administration and others have spent a tremendous amount of time getting the repopulation plans in place. The union leadership, faculty and staff, have been part of that plan. We have all our signage up around campus as required. We have supplies, such as hand sanitizer and disinfectant distributed, and physical spaces have been mapped out. He discussed room layouts, common spaces and bathrooms. He discussed student schedules, and face to face classes and fully remote classes. Most classes he thought would be completely online or in some hybrid form. He discussed the work that Human Resources is doing. He discussed the challenges with Athletics. He concluded by discussing the tremendous number of moving parts to get the fall semester up and running.

B. Fall Enrollment

The president said he had already covered enrollment and, as he indicated previously, we will be down 15%, or approximately 400 students. The university will continue to accept qualified students.

C. Courageous Conversations Forums/Anti-Racism Programming

The president reported on the Courageous Conversations Forums/Anti-Racism Programming. He commended C. Aneke for her voice on this matter. He explained the three events that had been scheduled for students, faculty, staff and alumni. He stated that the campus will continue to have frank conversations about race and how to aggressively continue working on this sensitive issue. He stated he will support initiatives that move this agenda forward.

D. Strategic Planning/Touchpoint II

The president thanked D. Phillips and all those that worked on the strategic plan. We have a compelling plan and the draft plan has been submitted to the Board of Higher Education for feedback. We hope to get it back in the summer and then have the plan ready go back to the faculty and staff for a final review. Ultimately, the board will need to approve the final plan before going to the BHE for its approval.

C. Phillips commended the president for his outstanding work. She noted that he rarely ever uses the word "I" but instead gives credit to others and wanted everyone to know of his contributions. She also did extend her appreciation to the whole team, from the faculty, librarians and staff, from the top down, and stated that they are all here for the students, especially during this unprecedented time.

The other board members echoed C. Phillips' sentiments. They all appreciated the hard work that everyone is doing, and especially the president's leadership during this global health emergency.

A. Clementi commended the administration and faculty having to rework everything to deliver a quality education. She mentioned the continued affiliation with the Fitchburg Art Museum, and that it's one of the campuses strongest partnerships.

E. News Articles

The news articles were submitted for informational purposes.

VIII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 10:12 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
L. Barrieau

Documents used during the meeting

- VOTE Minutes.pdf
- BOT Executive Session June 10, 2020.pdf
- VOTE Minutes Executive Session June 10, 2020.pdf
- Budget Narrative FY2021 .pdf
- 6 Year Net Price_Discount Rate.pdf
- Note on CARES Act aid to Fitchburg State Students in FY2020.pdf
- Summary Budget FY21.pdf
- Summary of Operating Funds FY21.pdf
- VOTE Technology Fee Increase.pdf
- VOTE GCE Fee Increase.pdf
- VOTE ALFA Fee Increase.pdf
- VOTE Budget FY2021.pdf
- VOTE Roll forward of funds to FY2021 budget.pdf
- Slate of Officers vote.pdf
- BOT Notifications 06292020 (1).pdf
- Clips for June 29 2020.pdf

**Fitchburg State University
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

TO: Board of Trustees	DATE: September 15, 2020
FROM: The President	REQUEST NUMBER: 01-20/21
SUBJECT: June 29, 2020 Board Meeting minutes	

It is requested that the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees vote to approve the minutes from the June 29, 2020 Board Meeting.

Cover Sheet

President's Goal Performance 2019-2020 Academic Year

Section: II. President's Assessment and Goals
Item: A. President's Goal Performance 2019-2020 Academic Year
Purpose: Discuss
Submitted by:
Related Material: President's - Goals 2019-20 Assessment.pdf



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Richard S. Lapidus, Ph.D.

PRESIDENT

President's Report to Trustees: Goals for 2019-20 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 audit for FY2019.
- The University continues to automate operations in Student Accounts to increase efficiency and to increase student friendly operations.
- The FY21 budget was developed to create a balance between the use of reserves and cost saving measures.
- The University was able to hold student fees relatively stable.
- The University managed the financial impact of COVID-19 and use of CARES Act funding to minimize its impact on FY20.
- The University successfully secured \$1.2M in historic tax credits to support the renovation of the Theater Block.
- The University successfully negotiated a new utility contract with a projected annual savings of approximately \$100,000.
- The University launched a planned giving program as the Saxifrage Society and now have eight confirmed estate plans with provisions for Fitchburg State.
- The University launched a giving by payroll deduction option.
- They University Annual Fund raised \$180,803 from 1,860 gifts.
- Private support gifts totaled \$1,919,842
- Grants and Sponsored Research raised \$2,162,007 from combined Federal, State and Private Foundations.
- A new marketing plan was established for housing including a revised pricing structure.

Information Technology Upgrades

- Completed a multi-faceted compliance project to bring Fitchburg State in line with the General Data Protection Regulation law passed by the European Union.

- Completed the setup and rollout of JAMF, a product that lets the university manage Apple Mac computers in our enterprise.
- Installed and implemented Cisco Umbrella DNS security for all faculty and staff laptops, and all systems on campus.
- Installed and deployed an automated form routing and approval tool for campus.
- Mediated the theatre block office space with permanent projectors and sound in the conference room and classroom.
- Installed four Google Meet hardware systems in Percival, Sanders, Mazzaferro and Conlon.
- Converted all email, calendars, contacts, notes and shared calendars from Microsoft Outlook to the Google Suite and supported this large transition with online and in-person trainings throughout the year. This enabled Google live captioning on meetings for easier collaboration with hearing impaired faculty and students.
- Enacted two-factor authentication for extra-protection in critical areas on campus. The campus student information system and system administration systems now require two-factor authentication before use.
- Converted the universities main student information systems from physical servers to virtual servers, which reduces costs and increases uptime and recovery.
- Upgraded fiber network cable in some areas on campus, continuing a multi-year replacement schedule.
- Collapsed all wireless networks into one, role-based network that automatically partitions users onto more secure areas depending on their work at FSU.
- Performed a Risk Analysis audit in IT and performed mediation as required.
- Replaced the main telephone system for the University with an in-cloud solution that includes software panic-buttons and brings FSU in compliance with the digital 911 act.

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

- Graduate Certificate: Special Issues in Counseling.
- Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS) in Interdisciplinary Studies (non-licensure) for the administrator licensure candidates of the DESE-approved Mass. School Administrators Association.
- MS Criminal Justice: revised a 100% online option and launched in summer 2020.
- Graduate Certificate in Creative Writing.
- The Exercise and Sports Science department developed three tracks within the Clinical Exercise Physiology concentration: pre-physical therapy, pre-physician assistant, and pre-athletic training.
- New curriculum for the Program Areas for Secondary and Middle School (PA-SM) were passed by the AUC, the curriculum covers middle and secondary teacher preparation in History, Math, English, Science, occupational education and chemistry.
- Developed and implemented proposals for courses and Concentrations for Health Care, Marketing, and Supply Chain Management within the accelerated online MBA program.
- Completed the course conversion for a 100% online delivery for our Masters in Computer Sciences.
- Completed and implemented a restructured online 7 week Accelerated Business Administration Bachelor Science degree.
- New Online Certificate MBA Programs in Accounting, Healthcare Management, Human Resource Management, Supply Chain Management and Marketing.
- Developed new non-credit programs in
 - Supporting LGBTQIA+ Students in K-12 Setting
 - Delivering High Quality Training on a Limited Budget - Online Self-Paced
 - Traveling the Road of Insulin Resistance through the Body and Brain Feb 4-13
 - Introduction to Cultural Competency for Educators
 - Intercultural Competency Training for Real Estate Professionals

- Back to Business During COVID-19 webinars
- Partnership with MindEdge to offer over 100 online certificate programs to support career professionals.
- 4 plus 1 programs were created for all licensure areas at the undergraduate level, creating pathways for students to add another license in their 5th year.
- An articulation agreement between Fitchburg State University and Monty Tech was created and approved. This agreement allows students at Monty Tech to receive college level credits in the early childhood degree program.
- Completed the self-study and the site visits and received ABET reaffirmation of accreditation for CS and CIS.
- Completed the self-study and the site visits and received IACBE reaffirmation of accreditation for BSBA (Accounting, Marketing, and Management) and MBA (Accounting, Management, HR Management).
- Honors Program Renewal: Massachusetts Board of Higher Education approved Fitchburg State's request to renew our membership in the Commonwealth's Honors Program.
- Completed the development of the first-year experience (FYE) seminar. Ten departments (2/3 of all depts.) have now successfully created a version of the course.
- Continued to expand the utilization of the Student Success Collaborative program to include texting to all faculty, use of Progress Reports for Attendance and Deficient Midterm Grade Reporting, and improve timely student registration.

Transfer Pathways

- Middlesex Community College's Associate in Science degree in Communication as a linked program for MassTransfer w/ B.S. Communications Media.
- Quinsigamond Community College's Associate in Arts degree in Liberal Arts - Media Communications Option as a linked program for MassTransfer w/B.S. Communications Media.
- North Shore Community College's Associate of Science degree in Liberal Arts – Communications and Media Studies as a linked program for MassTransfer w/B.S. in Communications Media.
- Two articulation agreements with Husson University, one into their Doctor of Pharmacy program and one with their Doctor of Physical Therapy, have been completed in spite of COVID related delays at both institutions.

3. Facilitate the development of a new campus strategic plan (2020-2025)

- The campus strategic planning process ran the duration of the academic year and was an inclusive process that allowed, faculty, staff and students and community members to actively participate and provide input throughout.
- Using the Department of Higher Education guidance, the university completed two of the three required “touchpoints.”
- The strategic plan is in alignment with the Department of Higher Education's Equity Agenda with a focus on “educational justice” and being a “student ready campus.”
- The University is currently waiting for the Commissioner to return our draft document with feedback so the process can be completed.

4. Continue to work on the improvement of student enrollment goals.

- The University continues to refine our value proposition and brand statement for inclusion in all of our integrated marketing communications. The strategic marketing positioning focuses on high touch, hands-on, and active learning.
- Sought consulting assistance to better integrate all functions of the enrollment management process.
- Improved our use of Slate (CRM that provides a comprehensive platform for admissions and enrollment management.)
- Purchased more student names at both the high school senior and mid-level high school level to strengthen the enrollment funnel and begin meaningful conversations with potential students earlier.
- Redesigned the campus viewbook for the coming year.
- Broadened the use of multimedia to better reach students and their parents and allow for communication in different ways.
- Distributed over \$200,000 in scholarships for merit and need to 226 students.
- Disability Services transitioned its database to Maxient.
- Counseling Services successfully redesigned the way they prepare for students in crisis by rebranding their “Walk-in Hour” to an “Urgent Hour.”
- 1,616 pounds of food was donated to the Falcon Bazaar prior to COVID-19 dismissal.
- A Belonging Survey comparing feelings of belongingness on campus of students who are engaged outside the classroom and those who are not was created and insightful.
- A Case Manager position was designed to assist students in navigating often complex and difficult situations that can be barriers to student success and retention.
- A listening tour was conducted with the Black Student Union and Latin American Student Association memberships.
- A new programming series, “Courageous Conversations” was launched to discuss and formulate responses to racism and social injustice.
- A “Bias Response Team” and protocol was created.

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

- The University hired six tenure-track faculty, six one-year temporary faculty and 21 staff.
- Currently, all positions, with few exceptions, are frozen as the university considers right-sizing measures.
- Efforts for all searches continued to emphasize diversity in the candidate pools.

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

- The University completed Phase 3 of the Percival Hall renovation (modernization of general-purpose classrooms located on the second floor.)
- Successfully completed the first round of deferred maintenance projects in collaboration with DCAM. This included Recreation Center roof replacement and window replacements in Edgerly Hall and Thompson Hall.

- Finished the second half of the Russell Tower bathroom renovations and upgrades.
- Completed the replacement and upgrade of the Mara Village walkways. All walkways are now ADA accessible.
- Completed the ADA walkway compliance work on Herlihy Hall.
- Installed new parcel postal delivery boxes that now allow students 24/7 access to package delivery.

7. Oversee the website redesign project

- A total redesign of the university website is nearly complete. The site will now be, for the first-time, responsive which will allow web pages to render well on a variety of devices and screen sizes.
- Converted to Drupal content management software which will allow for tremendous flexibility and integration potential of new features as the website continues to evolve over time.
- Anticipated launch date, late September 2020.

8. Continue to strengthen university/community relationships.

- The University has placed significant effort on strengthening alumni relations with support of the Alumni Association. (Alumni events including Homecoming and reunions, golf tournaments, alumni hockey, baseball, softball, soccer, basketball and gatherings on campus in the regional area, Cape Cod and Florida.)
- Developed virtual alumni town halls, coffee hours and “Falcon Talks.”
- Continued to strengthen connection with the Fitchburg Art Museum with programing and sponsorship support.
- The University facilitated the events in conjunction with the celebration of the 125th Anniversary with a series of programs, performances and exhibitions.
- The University produces a monthly Alumni E-Newsletter and Contact Magazine.
- The university has worked with the City of Fitchburg on infrastructure planning around the downtown main street area.
- The university has assisted the city with the collection of data around the upcoming census
- 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
- Fitchburg Public Library - Foundation Board
- NCAA Committee on Infractions
- Presidents Higher Education Reopening Working Group (Advisory to Governor Baker’s Massachusetts Reopening Advisory Board)

Although not part of my formal goals, a tremendous portion of this year's efforts revolved around COVID-19 response. Collectively, the campus community responded to the challenge, converting courses to online or remote, establishing ways of continuing to provide the full array of student support service, transitioning business offices for continuity of operation, significantly changing technology to accommodate the move off-campus, and at the same time maintaining the health and safety of the entire campus community. Feedback at the end of the semester from students was positive and we learned good information about how to improve what we were going to need to do for successful summer activities and a fall academic launch. Faculty and staff learned similarly about what worked well and areas that needed refinement. It remains a continuous learning experience.

Cover Sheet

Accept the President's Goal Assessment for AY2019-2020- VOTE (02-20/21)

Section: II. President's Assessment and Goals
Item: B. Accept the President's Goal Assessment for AY2019-2020- VOTE
(02-20/21)
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material: VOTE Accept the President's Goal Performance for 2019-2020.pdf

**Fitchburg State University
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

TO: Board of Trustees	DATE: September 15, 2020
FROM: The President	REQUEST NUMBER: 02-20/21
SUBJECT: Accept the President’s Goal Performance for AY2019-20	

It is requested that the Board of Trustees accept the performance appraisal summary of the president by the Chairman for AY2019-AY2020 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 AY2020-2021

Section: II. President's Assessment and Goals
Item: C. President's Goals AY2020-2021
Purpose: Discuss
Submitted by:
Related Material: President's - Goals 2020-21.pdf



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Richard S. Lapidus, Ph.D.

PRESIDENT

President's Report to Trustees: Goals for 2020-21 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. Continue to lead the campus efforts related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Maintain sound financial management and operational controls.
3. Continue to work on the completion and approval of the new campus strategic plan (2020- 2025).
- 3a. Begin the implementation of strategic initiatives.
4. Oversee the self-study year in support of the NECHE accreditation process to conclude in March 2022.
5. Continue to finalize the work on the new website redesign and launch.
- 5a. Guide the development of integrated communication in support of the website and campus brand.
6. Continue to work on student enrollment goals.
7. Continue to evaluate the campus organizational structure in support of the university mission.
8. Oversee ongoing capital projects and advocate for additional funding to address deferred maintenance and renovation needs as appropriate.
9. Continue to strengthen university/community relationships.

Cover Sheet

Accept the President's Goals for AY2020-2021 - VOTE (03-20/21)

Section: II. President's Assessment and Goals
Item: D. Accept the President's Goals for AY2020-2021 - VOTE (03-20/21)
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material: VOTE President's 2020-2021 Goals.pdf

**Fitchburg State University
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

TO: Board of Trustees	DATE: September 15, 2020
FROM: The President	REQUEST NUMBER: 03-20/21
SUBJECT: Accept the President's Goals for AY2020-2021	

It is requested that the Board of Trustees accept the President's goals for AY2020-2021.

Cover Sheet

University Investment Market Value

Section: III. Investment Account Balances
Item: A. University Investment Market Value
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: University & Foundation Investment Balances FY19 FY20.pdf

Investment Account Balances

	6/30/2019	6/30/2020
University Long-Term	Market Value	Market Value
Enterprise Portfolio	\$ 2,137,103	\$ 2,251,582
Northern Trust Portfolio	\$ 10,884,168	\$ 11,046,923
Rollstone Portfolio	\$ 4,793,625	\$ 5,200,668
Long-Term Total	\$ 17,814,897	\$ 18,499,174

	Market Value	Market Value
University Short-Term		
Rollstone Bank Money Market	\$ 5,211,610	\$ 5,282,637
MMDT - Control	\$ 6,098,818	\$ 6,201,338
Short-Term Total	\$ 11,310,428	\$ 11,483,975

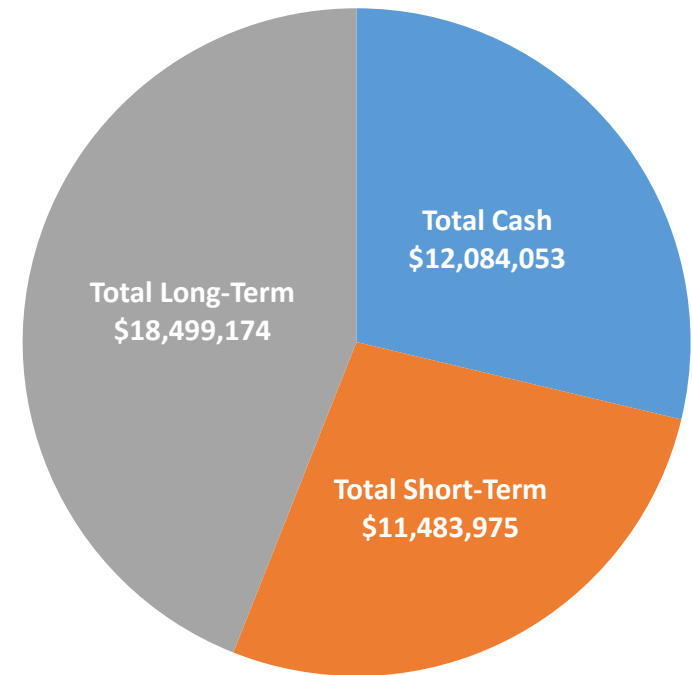
	Market Value	Market Value
University Cash		
Enterprise Bank	\$ 16,250,891	\$ 11,986,725
Webster Bank	\$ 97,149	\$ 97,328
Cash Total	\$ 16,348,040	\$ 12,084,053

	Market Value	Market Value
Foundation Long-Term		
Foundation Rollstone Portfolio	\$ 8,506,375	\$ 9,244,190
Foundation Eaton Vance Portfolio	\$ 9,633,643	\$ 9,915,938
Foundation Enterprise Portfolio	\$ 2,249,682	\$ 2,300,598
Long-Term Total	\$ 20,389,699	\$ 21,460,726

	Market Value	Market Value
Foundation Cash		
FSUF Operating	\$ 244,895	\$ 953,032
Fidelity Bank Money Market	\$ 470,343	\$ 471,553
Workers Credit Union	\$ 58,801	\$ 59,008
Short-Term Total	\$ 774,039	\$ 1,483,593

University Investment Market Value

as of 6/30/2020



Cover Sheet

Personnel Actions (N01-20/21)

Section: IV. Notifications
Item: A. Personnel Actions (N01-20/21)
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: BOT Notifications 09152020.pdf

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY**Board of Trustees****NOTIFICATIONS**

TO: Board of Trustees	DATE: September 15, 2020
FROM: The President	NOTIFICATION NUMBER: N01-20/21
SUBJECT: Personnel Actions	

New Hire

Jescah Apamo-Gannon Effective: 9/1/2020 End: 5/31/2021	Assistant Professor Education	\$75,000.00
Tahkeya Blake Effective: 9/8/2020	Associate Director of Multicultural Outreach and Recruitment Admissions	\$66,000.00
Evelyn Dina Effective: 8/24/2020	Staff Assistant, Case Manager Student Affairs	\$53,000.00

Rehire

Edwardo Ramirez Martinez Effective: 9/1/2020 End: 5/31/2021	Instructor Mathematics	\$48,580.00
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Retirement

Richard McCluskey Effective: 9/5/2020	Director of Materials Management Materials Management	\$93,981.38
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Resignation

Kathleen Craigen Effective: 9/4/2020	Staff Assistant, Outreach & Recruitment Coord School of Business and Technology	\$50,460.01
Tara Cringan Effective: 8/28/2020	Associate Director Admissions	\$69,190.76

Jordan Orrell	Staff Assistant, Athletic Trainer	\$45,900.00
Effective: 8/9/2020	Athletics	

Keith Williamson	Dean	\$147,900.00
Effective: 12/31/2020	School of Business and Technology	

Leave Without Pay

Jennifer Berg	Professor	\$81,261.97
Effective: 9/1/2020	Mathematics	
End: 8/31/2022		

Jane Huang	Professor	\$87,834.97
Effective: 1/14/2021	Earth & Geographic Sciences	
End: 5/29/2021		

Promotion

Lindsay Carpenter Connors	From: Staff Assistant Career Counselor	From: \$51,418.99
Effective: 8/17/2020	To: Associate Director for Internship Coordination and Employer Relations Career Services & Advising Center	To: \$68,500.00

Darryl Les	From: Accountant III	From: \$60,371.22
Effective: 10/13/2020	To: Staff Associate, OneCard Manager OneCard Office	To: \$70,000.00

Change in Salary/Adjustment

Lindsay Carpenter Connors	Staff Assistant Career Counselor	From: \$49,418.99
Effective: 7/1/2020	Academic Coaching & Tutoring	To: \$51,418.99

Change in Work Schedule/Funding Additional Year

Marissa Monteiro	Staff Asst Downtown Events & Mktg Coord	\$47,500.00
Effective: 9/23/2020	ReNom (Reimagine North of Main)	

Cover Sheet

Committee Assignments

Section: VI. Chair's Report
Item: A. Committee Assignments
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: Standing Committee List FY2021.pdf

Board of Trustees Standing Committees – FY2021

The Committee on Academic Affairs shall have the following powers and duties:

1. To consider policies regarding the quality, character, and extent of instruction and research at the University, including policies governing admission requirements, programs of instruction, curriculum, degrees, public service activities, and research, and to make recommendations to the Board of Trustees with respect thereto.
2. To consider policies relates to the educational purposes and responsibilities of the University and evaluate the same on a long-range basis, and to make recommendations to the Board of Trustees with respect thereto.
3. To advise the President on any matter within the scope of the Committee’s duties.

Academic Affairs

Anna Maria Clementi
Frank O’Donnell
Lynn Barrieau

The Committee on Administration and Finance shall have the following powers and duties:

1. To inquire into all fiscal affairs of the University, to consult with the President, and to consider and recommend to the Board of Trustees for action matters relative to the general administrative service functions and the fiscal and budgetary requirements and operation of the University, and those policies and other matters pertaining to the physical properties of the University, including all buildings, land acquisition and transfer, landscape plans, and developments and construction.

Finance and Administration

Deborah Phillips – Chair
Lynn Barrieau
Martha Nicholson
David Tiernan

The Executive Committee shall have the following powers and duties:

1. To act upon matters referred to it by the President of the University, when prompt action is necessary.
2. To consider and act upon proposals referred by the Board of Trustees.

Executive/Nominating

Donald Irving – Chair
Deborah Phillips - Vice Chair
Lynn Barrieau– Clerk

The Committee on Student Life shall have the following powers and duties:

1. To consult with the President and consider and recommend to the Board of Trustees for action, matters pertaining to student life and activity, student Government, and the health and well-being of the student body.

Student Affairs

Anna Maria Clementi
Steven Olson
Carolyn Stimpson
David Tiernan

The Committee on Personnel shall have the following powers and duties:

1. To consult with the President and consider and recommend to the Board of Trustees for action, matters relative to the personnel needs of the University.

Personnel

Frank O'Donnell
Delfi Nieto
Deborah Phillips

Self-Evaluation (Ad Hoc)

Anna Maria Clementi – Chair
Delfi Nieto
Lynn Barrieau

Chairman Donald Irving is ex-officio on each standing committee.

Cover Sheet

Conflict of Interest

Section: VII. President's Report
Item: E. Conflict of Interest
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement.pdf
Conflict of Interest Policy.pdf



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Richard S. Lapidus, Ph.D.
PRESIDENT

**Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement
For Trustees, Foundation Board Members, and Foundation Supporting Organization, Inc.
Members**

Introduction

Trustees, Foundation Board members, and Supporting Organization members have a fiduciary duty to the University, the Foundation, and/or the Supporting Organization and, as such, should act in a manner consistent with this obligation and exercise particular care that no detriment to the interest of the University, the Foundation, and/or the Supporting Organization (or the appearance of such detriment) may result from a conflict between the interests of the University, the Foundation, and/or the Supporting Organization and personal financial interests an individual may have. Therefore, each individual of these boards will annually disclose any personal interest, which he or she may have, in any matter pending before the University, the Foundation, and/or the Supporting Organization and will refrain from participation in any decision on such matter.

Trustees, Foundation Board members, and Supporting Organization members who are also an officer, board member, committee member, or staff member of a contractor, vendor, or supplier of, or to, shall identify his or her affiliation with that organization. Further, in connection with any committee or board action specifically directed to that organization, he/she will refrain from participating in the decision affecting that organization.

Additionally, Trustees, Foundation Board members, and Supporting Organization members will refrain from obtaining any list of clients for personal or private solicitation purposes at any time during the term of their affiliation.

**Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement
Acknowledgement of Receipt**

At this time, I am a board member, a committee member, consultant to, or employee of the following organizations:

This disclosure statement shall certify that I, am not now, nor at any time during the past year, been:

- 1) a participant, directly or indirectly, in any arrangement, agreement, investment, or other activity with any vendor, supplier, or other party, doing business with the University, the Foundation and/or the Supporting Organization, which has resulted or could result, in personal benefit to me; and/or
- 2) a recipient, directly or indirectly, of any salary payments, loans or gifts of any kind, free service, discounts or other fees from, or on behalf of, any person or organization engaged in any transaction with the University, the Foundation, and/or the Supporting Organization and its affiliates.

Exceptions to items 1 or 2 above are stated below, or attached, with a description of the transactions and of the interest, whether direct or indirect, which I have (or have had during the past year) with the persons or organizations having transactions with the University, the Foundation, and/or the Supporting Organization and its affiliates.

Date _____ Signature _____



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Richard S. Lapidus, Ph.D.

PRESIDENT

Conflict of Interest Policy

Purpose:

This conflict of interest policy (“the policy”) is intended to:

- protect the interests of Fitchburg State University (“the University”) and serve as a guide when the University is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit, directly or indirectly, the private interest of university officers, trustees, or directors;
- enable such individuals to recognize situations that may be subject to question and resolve them to avoid conflicts of interest; and/or
- supplement, not replace, any applicable federal and state laws governing conflict of interests.

Who is subject to the policy?

This policy covers:

- members of the Board of Trustees, including honorary trustees, that participate in board and committee meetings, and members of the Foundation Board and its associated committees.

Policy:

Trustees and Foundation Board members have a fiduciary duty to the University and, as such, should act in a manner consistent with this obligation and exercise particular care that no detriment to the interests of the University (or the appearance of such detriment) may result from a conflict between the interests of the University and personal financial interests an individual may have.

An individual has a financial interest if that person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:

- an ownership or investment interest in an organization supplying goods or services to the University;
- performed services for other individuals or organizations that do business with the University; and/or
- a potential ownership, investment interest, or compensation arrangement with any individual or organization seeking to do business with the University.

In general, when those covered by this policy are deemed to be in a conflict of interest situation with respect to any matter before the Boards or administration, that individual will refrain from participating in the consideration of any proposed transaction, unless specifically requested to provide information regarding the transaction in question. The individual will refrain from voting on, or taking any position for or against, the proposed transaction. When deemed appropriate, a notification will be made in the minutes of the meeting that the person involved neither participated in the consideration of the proposed transaction nor voted on the matter.

In all other instances where it is determined that a conflict of interest exists, such conflicts, and their remedy, shall be disclosed to the Board of Trustees and/or the Foundation Board of Directors at their next meeting.

Conflict of Interest Policy Page 2

Disclosure:

The University is aware that it may not be possible to completely avoid all relationships between those individuals covered by this policy and certain third parties with whom the University transacts business. One of the keys to evaluating the potential conflict is full disclosure. All individuals covered by this policy shall complete, at least annually, a *Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement*. These disclosure statements shall be reviewed and accumulated by the President's Office and furnished to the Board of Trustees, the Foundation Board of Directors, and/or the President upon request.

If an individual covered by this policy believes that he or she may have a conflict of interest with respect to this policy, or any particular transaction that has not been previously disclosed, he or she will promptly and fully disclose the potential conflict to the President and will refrain from participating in any related transactions or decisions of the University until the conflict is reviewed and a determination has been made.

Individual disclosure statements will be held in confidence by the President. The statements will be open for public inspection only:

- by official action of the Board of Trustees for university matters or by official action of the Foundation Board of Directors for Foundation matters upon showing of good cause;
- with the consent of the person who submitted the data to be disclosed; and/or
- by court order or as otherwise required by Massachusetts or federal law or regulation.

Questions:

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the President.

Approved by the Board of Trustees _____

Approved by the Foundation Board of Directors _____

Cover Sheet

News Articles

Section: VII. President's Report
Item: F. News Articles
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: September 2020 News Clips (1).pdf

LOCAL NEWS

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FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

A move-in day like no other



Senior Anthony De Freitas from Groton cleans the bins that students are using to carry their belongings to their dorm rooms on Tuesday morning.



JOHN LOVE PHOTOS / SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE

Junior Michael Sellards from East Boston takes a COVID-19 test as he checks in for the new school year at Fitchburg State University Tuesday. Giving him instructions on how to take the test is nurse Kara Lewis.



Students were given FSU face masks upon checking in Tuesday.

LOCAL NEWS

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FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Most classes to be in hybrid format

By Daniel Monahan

dmonahan@sentinelandenterprise.com

FITCHBURG » Fitchburg State University will look much different when students return to campus in the fall because of the ongoing pandemic.

On Tuesday, President Richard Lapidus and Vice President for Student Affairs Laura Bayless discussed the changes students and faculty will encounter, adding that there are many new challenges this year.

“It’s just added more complexity,” he said. “But I think that we worked really hard on a reopening game plan.”

Bayless said she’s excited about the prospect of students returning to the campus and the vibrancy they bring with them.

“We have put really good plans in place to de-densify and demonstrate where social distancing needs to happen,” she said. “It’s going to be really different this fall, but it will be so

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FSU

FROM PAGE 3A

good to have students, faculty, and staff back on campus.”

According to the pair, the university’s new health and safety measures will begin before a student ever steps foot on campus.

Prior to returning to campus, students and staff will participate in a training program that details the safety guidelines and confirms that they understand and will comply with expectations.

“We have made our expectations really clear and that will continue to be reinforced over time,” Bayless said. “For students, if there’s evidence that they’re flouting those expectations ... we can hold them accountable.”

Bayless said the university is not trying to restrict students’ freedoms, but these plans need to be followed to keep everyone safe.

When students return to campus, most classes will be offered in a hybrid format, blending in-person instruction with remote sessions and classroom configurations will be modified to allow for social distancing on campus, according to the university.

Classes that require laboratory work or extensive use of technology will have in-person options available.

“Maybe 30% of the student population would be on campus and they would be rotating on and off to keep density down,” Lapidus said.

Another major change for the uni-

versity takes shape in the residence halls, which are opening with reduced occupancy. Lapidus said there are about 35-40% fewer students living on campus this year after most rooms were reduced to single occupancy.

Students will begin moving onto campus on Aug. 31.

Students and faculty will also be subject to the state’s travel order, which requires anyone coming from a higher risk state to have proof of a negative COVID-19 test or undertake a 14-day quarantine.

Lapidus said one of the biggest challenges has been understanding and coordinating a testing system.

“None of us are trained on testing or contact tracing, so we needed to get some expert advice,” he said. “These are all new things to us.”

Fitchburg State will be conducting its own COVID-19 surveillance testing, in partnership with the Broad Institute.

In addition, the university is partnering with the ACTION Center of Community Health Connections located in Fitchburg for students to be tested if they have been exposed to the virus. Payments and insurance rates will apply.

The university anticipates offering testing the week of Aug. 24 for staff and some students, and the week of Aug. 31, testing will be conducted for faculty and students.

Those who test positive will be immediately sent home to quarantine or isolated in a designated part of campus. Those who are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 would inform the Student Affairs Office and not come to campus or leave

their residence hall.

Contact tracing will also be conducted for any individual who tests positive, Lapidus said.

Lapidus said Fitchburg State is in constant communication with the city’s health officials and watching the number of cases in the region.

“When we start to see a problem, we will respond accordingly,” he said.

While the new protocols ensure the safety of students and staff, Lapidus said it was a challenge to create an opening model that seems to undermine the fundamental purpose of a university.

“You’re building a model that’s designed to do the opposite of what a university is supposed to do,” Lapidus said. “We’re supposed to bring people together, we’re supposed to create networks, and a variety of things. And during this crisis we’re asked to do the opposite.”

The goal now, he said, is to create those interactions and experiences despite the limitations.

Bayless said the university learned how to do that last spring, when classes were disrupted due to the initial COVID-19 outbreak.

At the time, students and school officials began setting up virtual social gatherings like online bingo or virtual escape rooms, she said. That creative thinking also applied to the classroom or to other university offerings such as counseling or mentorships, Bayless said.

“It’s different but I think that we have really great plans in place for it,” Bayless said.

The first day of classes – both with hybrid learning and virtual – will be Sept. 3.

FALL REOPENING

FSU details health, safety guides

By Daniel Monahan

dmonahan@sentinelandenterprise.com

FITCHBURG » Fitchburg State University, which announced it would reopen with both in-person and remote instruction, released new details this week about its plans for keeping students safe, including a randomized testing program.

As students prepare to return to campus this fall, university officials have implemented a variety of new measures to promote social distancing, mask-wearing, and other safety protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The first day of classes – both in person and virtual – will be Sept. 3.

“We are excited for your return to campus and looking forward to a great – albeit different – fall semester,” the university wrote in its repopulation plan.

The university said it cannot guarantee zero cases of COVID-19, or prevent community infections, but added that its top priority was creating a culture of safety and accountability to maintain a healthy campus.

Fitchburg State will be conducting its own COVID-19 surveillance testing, in partnership with the Broad Institute.

It will be testing a randomized sample of members of the university each week to track trends of the spread of the virus, if any. Students will be notified if they are part of this randomized sample for a given week, and be notified of test results.

In addition, the university is partnering with the ACTION Center of Community Health Connections located in Fitchburg for students to be tested if

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FSU

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they have been exposed to the virus. Payments and insurance rates will apply.

The university is in the process of determining a process for contact tracing.

Everyone on campus will be required to wear a face covering over the nose and mouth when indoors. They are also required outdoors when six-foot physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Students will also be required to self-monitor their health daily. Those who are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 would inform the Student Affairs Office and not come to campus or leave their residence hall.

The university anticipates offering testing the week of Aug. 24 for staff and some students, and the week of Aug. 31, testing will be conducted for faculty and students.

Students and faculty will also be subject to the state’s travel order, which requires anyone coming from a higher risk state to have proof of a negative COVID-19 test or undertake a 14-day quarantine.

When the semester begins in September, most classes will be offered in a hybrid format, blending in-person instruction with remote sessions and classroom configurations will be modified to allow for social distancing on campus, according to the university.

Prior to returning to campus, all students are required to review a series of online training videos and policies to meet requirements to repopulate campus.

Residence halls will open with reduced occupancy. Most rooms will be configured as singles with some others configured as doubles to serve as “family units” within suites.

The university’s dining areas will be open but with new protocols and occupancy limits, along with regular sanitizing of chairs and tables, according to the university.

On Thursday, the university announced it was canceling its study abroad programs which were planned for the spring semester.

The four planned programs would have sent faculty and students to Europe, Costa Rica and Japan.

“The health and safety of our university community remains a top priority,” Vice President for Academic Affairs Alberto J.F. Cardelle said. “We know the disappointment this announcement will create, but we are acting in the best interest of the health and safety of our community members.”

Cardelle said travel restrictions, health concerns, and passport processing delays were the root cause of the cancellation. He said the school is confident that it will return to a regular schedule of study abroad opportunities for students.

The reopening plan will remain fluid and is subject to change as further guidance and/or orders are directed from Gov. Charlie Baker and other state and federal authorities.

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

\$293G Department of Education grant renews Trio Program

Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » Fitchburg State University recently received a federal grant for \$293,000 to continue its TRIO Student Support Services program, which for over 20 years has helped first-generation, lower-income and high needs students excel in their collegiate studies.

The competitive federal grant program awards

funds to institutions of higher education to provide opportunities for academic development, assist students with basic college requirements, and to motivate students toward the successful completion of their post-secondary education.

The goal of the student support services program is to increase the college retention and graduation rates of its participants.

At Fitchburg State, the

program — formerly known as Expanding Horizons — has been supporting students since 1997.

Fitchburg State's grant will support services to 160 undergraduate students who qualify as low-income, first-generation, and/or have a disability, according to Interim Director of TRIO Student Support Services Beth Swartz.

“This program helps students succeed by offering proactive advising and individualized support plans, along with cultivating a sense of belonging,” Swartz said.

“These experiences help

enhance students' connection to the wider campus community and show them pathways to meeting their potential and finding success.”

Swartz also noted the work of Karen Frank Mays, who died earlier this year after a lengthy tenure as director of grants and sponsored programs at Fitchburg State. She is remembered for her talent and her unwavering commitment to students and her colleagues. “Karen worked tirelessly to write and re-win this grant before she passed away. We will all miss her greatly and are thankful for her contributions.”

COLLEGE TOWN

By Scott O'Connell

Telegram & Gazette Staff

FSU gets grant for student support program

Fitchburg State University has received a six-figure federal award to continue a program aimed at providing support to first-generation, low-income and high-needs students, the school recently announced.

The ultimate goal of the TRIO Student Support Services program, which began in 1997, is to increase the retention and graduation rates of those populations.

The \$293,000 grant will allow FSU to provide support services to 160 eligible students through the initiative.

“This program helps students succeed by offering proactive advising and individualized support plans, along with cultivating a sense of belonging,” said Beth Swartz, interim director of TRIO. “These experiences help enhance students’ connection to the wider campus community and show them pathways to meeting their potential and

LOCAL NEWS

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FALL SEMESTER

FSU preps for student arrivals

Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » Fitchburg State University will welcome students back to campus this month with an operational model designed to protect the health and safety of the community while honoring its commitment to students' educational objectives, according to a press release from the university.

"This will be a very different semester for

FSU » 6A

FSU

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our campus community, but the accommodations will serve our students as they pursue their degrees and assist with public health," Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus said. "Our faculty, who shifted gears so rapidly this spring to accommodate a remote semester, have taken advantage of training and resources to begin the fall strong. And our student support services stand ready to assist

by in-person and remote avenues."

While there will be time periods this week for students to drop off their belongings in advance (by appointment), the main move-in for new students will take place Monday, Aug. 31. Residence halls are opening at approximately 65% of capacity, with most rooms being used for single occupants. North Street between Pearl and Ross streets will be closed to traffic during the move-in (approximately 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) on Monday, and portions of Highland Avenue and Ce-

dar Street may be closed at times as well. The university is restricting the number of guests accompanying students during move-in.

Other steps the university is taking to be safe during the pandemic include:

- All members of the campus community are required to take a training course on COVID-related hygiene and prevention before the semester begins.

- New student orientation is being offered in a virtual model.

- The university will of-

'Our faculty, who shifted gears so rapidly this spring to accommodate a remote semester, have taken advantage of training and resources to begin the fall strong.'

— Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus

fer COVID testing to all students, faculty and staff beginning this week. Once the semester begins, the university will be testing a random sample of 425 members of the campus community each week.

Any positive results will be shared with the city's Health Department and a contact tracing regimen will be enacted.

- Classes will begin Thursday, Sept. 3, with approximately half of courses offered in a hybrid model mixing in-person and remote sessions. Many courses will be completely remote, and there will be a small number of exclusively face to face classes, including labs.

- All spaces on campus have been de-densified to allow for social distancing and advisory signage has been posted throughout campus.

- Students on campus meal plans will be served at a number of takeout stations. No seated dining options will be available this fall.

- As announced earlier this summer, the Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference has canceled all sports competitions for the fall.

- The university has canceled its annual Homecoming events.

For more detail on the university's plans for fall, visit fitchburgstate.edu/reopening. All campus communications related to the pandemic are being posted to fitchburgstate.edu/coronavirus.



POLICE CHIEF

Sir Robert Peel's Nine Principles

1. The basic mission for which the police exist is to prevent crime and disorder.
2. The ability of the police to perform their duties is dependent upon public approval of police actions.
3. Police must secure the willing co-operation of the public in voluntary observance of the law to be able to secure and maintain the respect of the public.
4. The degree of co-operation of

Great Ideas 2020 SHAPING THE FUTURE OF POLICING

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Combining Higher Education and Police Training



By Lisa Lane McCarty, Academy Director, Fitchburg State University Police Program, Massachusetts

THE FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY POLICE PROGRAM IS AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO POLICE TRAINING that is the only model of its kind in the United States. The program partners with—and is authorized by—the Massachusetts Municipal Police Training Committee (MPTC) to combine higher education and police training in a “4+1” educational design. In five years, the students receive (in this order) a bachelor’s degree, a full-time municipal police certification, and a master’s degree.

Freshmen entering the program receive a light background check before admission into the program. Once enrolled, they must adhere to all of the MPTC recruit rules and regulations for their entire four years of undergraduate schooling. In other words, for four years, they follow the same academic, conduct, uniform, and appearance and grooming standards that a traditional recruit follows for approximately 24 weeks.

Two days after they graduate with their undergraduate criminal justice degree, the students enter the MPTC full-time municipal police academy. The academy is shorter than a traditional academy (at 17 weeks) because the students have already taken about one-third of the academy curriculum in their undergraduate classes. Once they complete the academy, they are fully certified as full-time officers and can be hired to work in any municipality in Massachusetts (and the surrounding New England states). They then begin their “+1” master’s degree year. This portion of the program is online due to the students getting hired so quickly and beginning field training programs, which make attending in-person classes difficult.

“This program is creating highly educated, highly trained, and highly disciplined officers... they essentially have a four-year record of academics and conduct.”

While in the Police Program, the students are required to wear uniforms to all classes that contain academy curriculum. The uniform consists of 5.11 khakis, 5.11 blue polos with their names embroidered, black belts with silver buckles, and high-gloss boots. Men must have short hair and no facial hair. Women must wear their hair in a tight bun and wear no jewelry or makeup.

All police students attend a mandatory monthly meeting with the academy director and the drill staff. The students must wear their uniforms to these meetings, as well. Every meeting begins with a uniform inspection. They are taught the art of drill and ceremony at these meetings and receive other training related directly to policing. This includes topics such as mental health awareness, active shooter, health and wellness, fitness, fair and impartial policing, and working with victims.

Currently about 200 police students are in the program, ranging from freshmen to seniors. The police students are broken into platoons and squads with one class leader, four platoon leaders, and sixteen squad leaders. This structure allows students in excellent standing to step up and be leaders with direction and guidance from the academy director and the drill staff. It also prepares the students to work as one unit, which will be critical in the academy.

The program has run two Recruit Officer Courses (ROCs) so far, in 2018 and 2019, and the third course began on June 1, 2020. The first two classes were pilot groups of ten and nine students respectively. As an example, of the nine students in the most recent academy class (the second ROC) who graduated in September 2019, all nine have been hired. Four individuals were hired prior to their graduation date, and eight of the nine have successfully completed their field training programs and are excelling in the various departments where they were hired. The current course (the third ROC) has twenty-four students, five who have already been hired by various police departments in the state (and were hired prior to the start date of June 1). This pre-course hiring is one of the goals of the program.

This program is creating highly educated, highly trained, and highly disciplined officers. The average age of these graduates from the academy is between 22 and 23 years of age. They are a known quantity to hiring chiefs because they essentially have a four-year record of academics and conduct. If they violate any of the rules and regulations over the four years, they are dismissed from the program and, therefore, do not ever make it into the academy. Most of these recruits are very physically fit because the program includes volunteer physical training sessions throughout their four years, which are run by student leaders.

There is a huge cost savings for municipal chiefs in Massachusetts with these recruits as well. Once they graduate from the academy, they can be hired by chiefs at no cost to the department. The recruits pay for their academy and all of their equipment through tuition and graduate loans, and the agencies do not have to pay them throughout the modified academy as agencies are required to do with traditional academy recruits.

At a time when it is becoming increasingly difficult for police departments to find and hire quality police officers, this program offers a unique and viable solution. ♡



For more information, please email the author at llane2@fitchburgstate.edu.

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HIGHER EDUCATION



BRACING FOR DEEP CUTS

JULIA MALAKIE / LOWELL SUN

Middlesex Community College director of public safety Dan Martin, with assistant director of facilities Steve Hentz, shows steps MCC is taking to reduce the risk of COVID-19 when school reopens, including 6-foot social distancing stickers.

By Elizabeth Dobbins
edobbins@lowellsun.com

LOWELL » In higher education administration, it's a good rule of thumb: when the economy tanks, enrollment blossoms. Out of work residents look to grow their opportuni-

ties in the classroom.

But this time around, local institutions aren't counting on it.

"We're questioning whether that's going to be the case this time around, because the factor causing unemployment is different than anything be-

fore," said Bob LaBonte, the chief financial officer for Mount Wachusett Community College in Gardner.

Instead, schools are bracing for cuts. This includes the University of Massachusetts Lowell, which last week announced it would reduce its operating

budget by 20%, temporarily lay off 100 staff members and eliminate another 100 staff and administrator positions through "retirements, voluntary separations or other departures." Earlier in June, Middlesex Community College also

Universities

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announced layoffs impacting some full-time and many part-time staff.

While Fitchburg State University and MWCC haven't announced any layoffs so far, they're expecting a financial outlook much leaner than what the institutions projected just six months ago.

Amid these grim projections is a lot of uncertainty. Administrators identified two big question marks.

The first is state funding. Though never timely — it's been years since the state has finalized a budget before July 1, the start of the new fiscal year — this year is particularly unclear. The preliminary budget the governor proposed in January was rendered moot by the coronavirus, which upended state finances.

Some colleges have called for a boost to state funding, even amid shortfalls. Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus isn't banking on it. The university is instead estimating a 10% to 15% decrease in state funding.

"I think we're taking the realist approach that we're probably not going to get a windfall," he said.

Second, administrators are still waiting to see what type of impact the virus will have on enrollment. How will prospective students respond to precautions required by COVID-19 as some classes move online and residence hall living changes? Match this with a smaller college-aged population than years past, an ongoing demographic trend that has already strained many universities.

"I think we have a couple of factors working against us," Lapidus said.

Even as schools confront these challenges, MCC President James Mabry said higher education has a role to play in the coronavirus response.

"We're really trying to stay focused on how we can be a key player in rebuilding the economy," he said.

Before the coronavirus outbreak, MCC determined it needed to chop 5% from its \$70 million budget — a strategy that allows the college to forgo raising student fees again, according to Mabry. He said contracts for about a third of the school's 450 to 500 part-time staff will not be renewed.

"There's a lot of positions we no longer need in this current environment," he said.

The college also announced it will now require prior approval for out-of-state travel and overtime and will not fill vacant full-time positions, except for a few critical spots.

Faculty, including adjuncts, are not included in these cuts, according to Mabry.

Similarly, Christine Gillette, a spokeswoman for UMass Lowell, said the cuts announced for the university will not include any lay offs of faculty members or cuts in academic programs.

Without any reductions, UMass Lowell is expecting a \$50 million budget gap. This is in part brought on by expenses incurred by bringing 2,700 classes online last spring, according to Gillette. UMass Lowell also refunded \$15 million to students for room, board and parking. It also lost anticipated revenue streams, like planned events, due to COVID-19, according to university administrators.

"We are anticipating a greater budget shortfall in the coming fiscal year, with the uncertainties of enrollment, student housing and the state appropriation," according to the university. "Tuition was frozen to help our students during these difficult times, but also resulted in a loss of anticipated revenue."

In addition to the layoffs, all staff are being required to take five furlough days. Senior administrators must take ten days and the university is instituting reductions in construction and capital projects, according to Gillette.

Staff who are temporarily laid off will maintain their health insurance and will be eligible to receive unemployment insurance. Gillette said the university hopes to call back these workers sometime in the fall and they are encouraged by "strong" student enrollment numbers in line with previous years.

"We will re-evaluate in September after enrollment, state appropriation and other revenue streams become more definitive," she wrote. "That will determine when we may be able to call back staff who are temporarily laid off."

Meanwhile the university is increasing student support services and increasing financial aid and scholarship support, according to Gillette. About 2,700 UMass Lowell students received federal stimulus funds distributed by the university to help with finances.

"As a result of UMass Lowell's fiscal responsibility and entrepreneurial approaches, it is better positioned than many other universities to remain strong during this economic downturn," she wrote.

Fitchburg State University expects to end this fiscal year with a \$2.4 million shortfall, according to Jay Bry, vice president of finance and administration. The university will be using a 1/12 budget for the month of July.

So far the university has received about \$4 million



JULIA MALAKIE / LOWELL SUN

Sign on elevator limits capacity to two people.



JULIA MALAKIE / LOWELL SUN

Middlesex Community College director of public safety Dan Martin pulls off a social distancing sticker.

in federal coronavirus funding, with about half going directly to students and the other half to the university's expenses, Bry said.

MWCC is also starting the year with a 1/12 budget. LaBonte said the college is expecting a 10% decrease in enrollment.

Federal stimulus money received by the school will help preserve jobs, according to LaBonte. Before the coronavirus outbreak, he said MWCC was operating below budget projections for this fiscal year. Over time, the school had also put money away for a "rainy day," which LaBonte expects the school to use to offset a potential shortfall.

"If this isn't rain," he said. "I don't know what is."



JULIA MALAKIE / LOWELL SUN

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REOPENING PROCEDURES

FSU offers free biz webinars

Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » A series of free webinars being presented this month by the Center for Professional Studies at Fitchburg State University will offer valuable guidance to businesses looking to reopen safely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Navigating federal and state regulations can be overwhelming. The Center for Professional Studies at Fitchburg State, in collaboration with the Safety Trainers, has compiled the best combination of recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization, the Department of Public Health, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Food and Drug Administration, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the state of Massachusetts to get businesses

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FSU

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operating with safety and health as a top priority.

The programs are designed for anyone who is now part of a team or is responsible for managing health and safety in their workplace.

The webinars will run

from 3 to 4 p.m. July 27 through July 30. These four, one-hour webinars will bullet point out what businesses need to do to reopen.

Topics will include the “alphabet soup” of regulations and determining who in a business organization should be responsible for coordinating health and safety, as well as the engineering and administrative

controls that will apply to businesses and new house-keeping practices.

In partnership with Fitchburg State, the Safety Trainers will deliver this information in a manageable and organized system for business owners to take immediate action on implementing controls, training and updating policies to protect their enterprises and their employees.

For more information or to register, contact the Center for Professional Studies at cps@fitchburgstate.edu, or by phone at 978-665-3636.

Details are also available online at [fitchburgstate.edu/academics/continuing-education/center-for-professional-studies/back-to-business-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-a-4-part-webinar-series/](https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/continuing-education/center-for-professional-studies/back-to-business-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-a-4-part-webinar-series/).

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COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF NORTH CENTRAL

\$28G grant to support scholarships at FSU

Staff Report

FITCHBURG » The Community Foundation of North Central

Massachusetts has awarded Fitchburg State University \$28,000 for scholarships that will be awarded to students in the North Central Massachu-

setts Early College Academy. The funds will support renewable scholarships to local students from underrepresented populations who plan to at-

tend Fitchburg State. “Fitchburg State has long been committed to helping students navigate a successful

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Grant

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path to college completion, and the Early College Academy will help further that goal,” Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus said.

“Given the current economic crisis in the region, this work is more important than ever. These scholarships for local students could be the difference between the students attending college or not. We are grateful to the Community Foundation for recognizing the trans-

formative pot

early college model and their commitment to help students achieve their ambitions,” Lapidus said. The Early College Academy, formally designated by Gov. Charlie Baker in 2019, includes Fitchburg State, Mount Wachusett Community College, Fitchburg High School, Leominster High School, Sizer School and Gardner High School.

It is designed to increase college participation by giving students the opportunity to earn up to 12 college credits while still enrolled at their sending high schools.

To learn more about the Academy, please visit [nc-](#)

college.com/. Powered by BoardOnTrack

COLLEGE TOWN

By Scott O'Connell

Telegram & Gazette Staff

Fitchburg State receives \$28K award

Fitchburg State University has received a \$28,000 award it will use to fund scholarships for students in the North Central Massachusetts Early College Academy.

The money came from the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts, according to the school.

“Fitchburg State has long been committed to helping students navigate a successful path to college completion, and the Early College Academy will help further that goal,” Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus said in a statement. “Given the current economic crisis in the region, this work is more important than ever. These scholarships for local students could be the difference between the students attending college or not.”

The awards specifically will help local students from populations underrepresented in higher education to attend Fitchburg State. The Early College Academy, which the state formally designated in 2019, includes Fitchburg State, Mount Wachusett Community College, Fitchburg High School, Leominster High School, Sizer School and Gardner High School.

The initiative provides students the opportunity to earn up to 12 college credits while still in high school.

Most Affordable Online Master's in Education Degrees

If you're the type of person that takes pride in and works hard to maintain their practical knowledge and education, you might want to consider pursuing a degree that matches your priorities. Individuals with master's degrees in education are certified to become administrators, principals, education policy analysts, university professors, and much more. Below we've compiled a list of some of the most affordable online master's programs in the field of education. The colleges that run these programs are highly reputable, and the programs themselves are designed to accommodate all types of learners. It doesn't hurt that they're also affordable, high-ranking, and easily accessible through various online teaching formats.



Methodology

All schools considered for these rankings

- Are regionally or nationally accredited
- Offer at least one fully online business degree (with no more than two weeks of required in-person work)
- Were collected from official accrediting agency websites.

Schools are ranked solely by the average net price as released in the most recent IPEDs database collected in July of 2020.

2020 Most Affordable Online Colleges for Master's in Education Degrees

Rank	School	Average Net Price
# 1	Northeastern State University	\$9,415
# 2	Eastern New Mexico University-Main Campus	\$10,338
# 3	Arkansas Tech University	\$10,537
# 4	Dickinson State University	\$10,817
# 5	University of New Mexico	\$11,368
# 6	Minot State University	\$11,635
# 7	Fort Hays State University	\$12,108
# 8	West Texas A & M University	\$12,982
# 9	Adams State University	\$13,383
# 10	Valdosta State University	\$13,502
# 11	Eastern Illinois University	\$14,146
# 12	Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville	\$14,790
# 13	Fitchburg State University	\$15,237
# 14	Missouri State University	\$16,134
# 15	University of the Cumberlands	\$16,340
# 16	Campbellsville University	\$17,788
# 17	Mississippi College	\$18,040
# 18	Buena Vista University	\$18,449
# 19	Framingham State University	\$18,937
# 20	Georgia College & State University	\$20,823
# 21	Evangel University	\$22,045
# 22	Midway University	\$23,084
# 23	Strayer University	\$24,593

FITCHBURG STATE

Lapidus stands with foreign students

‘Valued members’ of the school community

By Daniel Monahan

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FITCHBURG » Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus on Thursday announced the university would continue to support international students in the face of federal guidelines barring them from institutions conducting classes entirely online.

Lapidus said these rules will pose great hardship to international students who wish to continue their studies.

“I want our international students to know they are valued members of the Fitchburg State community and we are working on their behalf in the hopes they can remain with us,” he said.

Last Monday, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement released guidelines that state international students attending colleges and universities operating online this fall will not be allowed to remain in the country.

The federal government doesn’t plan to issue visas to students taking all of their courses online for next semester and encouraged students to return abroad. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection will bar these students from entering the U.S.

The guidelines were announced while the country faces the COVID-19 pandemic and many institutions move toward online instruction due to health concerns.

Lapidus said the school’s Office of International Education is currently reviewing the guidelines to see how they will impact individual students.

“I am working with my counterparts at other institutions of higher education to develop a comprehensive response so that our voices are heard, and that the importance of our international students is made clear at the federal level,” he said.

He encouraged individuals to reach out to elected representatives in Washington, D.C., to make their feelings known.

Meryem Ezzahraoui, an international student from Morocco, said the federal guidelines for universities are shameful.

“It’s really disturbing for international students,” she said, adding students shouldn’t be forced to take in-person classes or face deportation. “The coronavirus will still be here in the fall semester, as well.”

Ezzahraoui said forcing international students to return home would create even greater problems in

the future.

“We might have trouble getting back or getting a visa later,” she said. “It’s going to be really disruptive. It costs a lot to go back and forth and it’s a big inconvenience for us and our families.”

Two weeks ago, the university announced students will return to campus for the fall semester with a mixture of in-person and remote instruction while keeping all members of the campus community safe.

When the semester begins in September, most classes will be offered in a hybrid format, blending in-person instruction with remote sessions, and classroom configurations will be modified to allow for social distancing on campus, according to Lapidus’ announcement.

As of now, it is unclear how the reopening plan will include international students at risk of being barred from the country.

Residence halls will open with reduced occupancy. Most rooms will be

‘It’s really disturbing for international students.’

— Meryem Ezzahraoui, international student from Morocco



SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE FILE PHOTO

Fitchburg State President Richard Lapidus on Thursday announced the university would continue to support international students in the face of federal guidelines barring them from institutions conducting classes entirely online.

configured as singles with some others configured as doubles to serve as “family units” within suites.

The university is still determining how room assignments will be made. The university’s dining areas will be open but with new protocols and occupancy limits, along with regular sanitizing of chairs and tables, according to Lapidus.

Officials are also awaiting guidance from the National Collegiate Athletic Association and the Mas-

sachusetts State College Athletic Conference on organized sports this fall.

Fitchburg State, along with every other college in the state, was forced to send students home when the COVID-19 pandemic hit back in mid-March. The university instituted a remote learning model to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

Information on the university’s ongoing COVID-19 response can be found at fitchburgstate.edu/coronavirus.

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FSU'S CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

Brush up on social justice at webinar

Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » The Center for Professional Studies at Fitchburg State University is offering two free webinars that will explore issues related to social justice, implicit bias and microaggressions.

The online sessions, being held from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Aug. 25 and Sept. 1, will be led by Faustina Cuevas, M.Ed., an independent diversity, equity and inclusion consultant.

“Social justice is everyone’s responsibility,” Cuevas said. “We can no longer be silent in the face of blatant racism, and unjust treatment of those most marginalized in our society. In the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi, if we want to see change, we need to be the change.”

“The Center for Professional Studies has been offering social justice courses for two-years,” said Fitchburg State Associate Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education Lisa Moison. “We started by offering intercultural competency courses for K-12 educators, as well as a course in supporting LGBTQIA+ students,

WEBINAR » 6A

Webinar

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which makes good sense. But, we felt that we needed to go beyond doing this work only in schools. We knew that it was equally important to offer this training to the business and nonprofit sectors.

“The Center worked with a team of diversity, equity and inclusion professionals to reimagine the training,” Moison continued. “We offered our first cultural competency training to the North Central Massachusetts Realtors Association this spring. It was a success and it made us want to reach even more professionals. By offering this free social justice webinar series, we hope to engage more with the Central Massachusetts business, nonprofit, and municipal agencies around the very important topic of racism, social justice, cultural competency, implicit bias and recognizing/understanding the damage of microaggressions. The university should lead our region in this vital work that can’t wait.”

The first session, titled “The Urgency of Social Justice,” will address the importance of social justice and why we can no longer be bystanders in the face of injustice. Participants will gain new understanding of social justice terminology and how those terms play a role in their lives, as well as intercultural competence and its importance in understanding ourselves and others. The difference between equality vs. equity and inclusion vs. belonging as a method to being a better ally will also be discussed.

The second session, titled “Addressing Implicit Bias and Microaggressions,” will use engaging videos, scenarios and other methods of learning to



COURTESY FAUSTINA CUEVAS

Faustina Cuevas will lead two free webinars that will explore issues related to social justice, implicit bias, and microaggressions on Aug. 25 and Sept. 1.

help deepen the understanding of these terms. Participants will learn how to identify their own implicit biases and define microaggressions, while discussing where they experienced or caused a microaggression and how to prevent it in the future. Participants will also gain tools to address and intervene when they witness, cause or experience a microaggression.

To learn more and to register, visit fitchburgstate.edu/academics/continuing-education/center-for-professional-studies/social-justice-webinar-series/, or contact the Center for Professional Studies at cps@fitchburgstate.edu, or by phone at 978-665-3636.

Cuevas was born and raised in the North Shore of Boston. She did her undergraduate and graduate degrees at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. At UMass, she studied psychology, Spanish and higher education. Being a first-generation college student and woman of color opened her eyes to the inequalities that exist in the educational system for people with marginalized identities.

She is constantly seeking to grow and learn, and places herself in spaces and around people who challenge her to be better.

She brings this energy and experience to her clients through her independent consulting work.

LOCAL

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COLLEGE TOWN

By Scott O'Connell
Telegram & Gazette Staff

Fitchburg State offers free online social justice training

Fitchburg State University's Center for Professional Studies is offering two free webinars in the next month that will cover social justice issues, implicit bias and microaggressions.

The university announced the two sessions, which will

run from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Aug. 25 and Sept. 1. They will be led by Faustina J. Cuevas, an independent diversity, equity and inclusion consultant, according to Fitchburg State.

"Social justice is everyone's responsibility," Cuevas said. "We can no longer be silent in the face of blatant racism, and unjust treatment of those most marginalized in our society. In the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi, if we want to see change, we need to be the change."

The first session, titled "The Urgency of Social Justice," is intended to help participants learn how to take an active role in upholding social justice, including learning terminology and intercultural competence. The second, ca

Bias and Microaggressions," will explore the meaning of those terms, and how participants can identify them in their own and others' behaviors and intervene.

The Center for Professional Studies has been offering social justice courses for two years, said the university's Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education Lisa Moison, initially for grade school educators.

"But we felt that we needed to go beyond doing this work only in schools," she said. "We knew that it was equally important to offer this training to the business and non-profit sectors."

For more information about the sessions and to register, visit www.fitchburgstate.edu and search for "social justice webinar."

Online master's degree ranks among most affordable

Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » Fitchburg State University's online graduate program in history has been ranked as one of the most affordable such programs in the country. The rankings, recently

posted by Online U, put the university's master's level history degree as the third-most affordable program in the U.S.

There will be a free webinar on the program at 5:30 p.m. July 15, where attendees can learn more about the curriculum, admissions requirements, finan-

cial aid opportunities and tuition. To register for the free webinar, visit <https://bit.ly/main-history>.

The master of arts in history program had been offered as a hybrid (blending in-person and online courses) for several years, but students have made it clear

they enjoy the flexibility of an online format. While the general method of course delivery has changed, much of what has attracted students to Fitchburg State's program for decades remains the same.

"For nearly 30 years, Fitchburg State's graduate program

in history has successfully trained students, enabling them to deepen their knowledge of the historian's craft, to explore a broad range of historical topics at the graduate level, and to work closely with faculty on historical research projects leading

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FSU

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to a master's thesis or a master's degree," said Professor Daniel Sarefield, who chairs the graduate program in history.

"Over this time, hundreds of students have refined their knowledge of the past and become better historical researchers and writers and better history instructors at the middle school, secondary and post-secondary levels."

OnlineU is a guide that researches accredited institutions offering online programs in order to provide rankings that help prospective students find an online program that matches their budgets and career aspirations. To be considered for these rankings, a program must be regionally or nationally accredited and offer a degree in a given subject that is obtainable online or requires only very limited amounts of in-person work, allowing students

to retain their current employment and meet other personal obligations. Fitchburg State's Master of Arts in History program was ranked third overall.

Since the 2017-18 academic year, the university's history graduate program has been offering courses online on a regular basis. University faculty offer high-quality graduate instruction in the discipline of history in online and hybrid (History Institute) courses, as well as one-on-one instruction in directed studies and thesis projects, that use technology to bring instructors and students together virtually to facilitate discussion and debate on course topics and enhance graduate instruction.

If you have any questions about the program or wish to speak with someone about pursuing a master of arts degree in history at Fitchburg State, contact Professor Sarefield at dsarefield@fitchburg-state.edu.

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FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

TARENTINO FUND BUYING VESTS FOR FUTURE COPS



COURTESY FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Members of the Tarentino Charitable Fund Board pose with Fitchburg State University Police Program academy students and staff.

Charity named for officer who died in line of duty in 2016

Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » The Officer Ronald Tarentino Jr. Charitable Fund has pledged more than \$7,000 to Fitchburg State University's police program to help defray the cost of personal safety protection vests for these future officers.

The fund was established in

honor of Auburn Police Officer Ronald Tarentino, who was killed in the line of duty on May 22, 2016.

"We are profoundly grateful to the Tarentino Charitable Fund for their support of our police program and their commitment to officer safety," Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus said. "Officer Tarentino's legacy of compassion and service stands as a powerful example for our students, who will never forget his sacrifice."

"The Officer Ronald Tarentino Jr. Charitable Fund is honored to

sponsor young men and women who are leading the way in community service," the Board of the Charitable Fund said in a statement. "This is a big responsibility. Our mission is to work hand in hand with organizations as well as community members to support and demonstrate acts of kindness, generosity and community service to individuals in need."

"The Officer Ronald Tarentino Jr. Charitable Fund has supported first responders and military families during loss, illness and tragic events, community mem-

bers who have experienced loss and tragedy, and organizations that continue to aid, support and work together to build a better community," the Board statement continued. "We are pleased to partner and offer this scholarship to Fitchburg State University Police Academy in memory of Officer Ronald Tarentino Jr."

Members of the third recruit officer course of Fitchburg State's police program are now enrolled in a 15-week summer academy, after which they will begin their master's degrees in

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criminal justice.

The 21 members of the class completed their bachelor's degrees in criminal justice in May, and at the end of the academy will be certified to work as po-

lice officers in Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

The program, developed in close collaboration with the state's Municipal Police Training Committee, is believed to be the first of its kind in the nation.

The program was recently featured in the July issue of Police Chief magazine, published by the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

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COLLEGE TOWN

By Scott O'Connell

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Tarentino fund aids FSU police program

A charitable fund created in honor of fallen Auburn police officer Ronald Tarentino Jr. has pledged more than \$7,000 to help provide protective equipment to Fitchburg State University's police program, the school announced last week.

"The Officer Ronald Tarentino Jr. Charitable Fund is honored to sponsor young men and women who are leading the way in community service," the board of the Charitable Fund said in a statement. "This is a big responsibility. Our mission is to work hand in hand with organizations as well as community members to support and demonstrate acts of kindness, generosity and community service to individuals in need."

Tarentino was killed in the line of duty on May 22, 2016.

Students in Fitchburg State's police program are enrolled in a 15-week summer academy, after obtaining their bachelor's degrees in criminal justice in May. At the completion of the academy, the 21 members of the class will be certified to work as police officers in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, according to Fitchburg State, as well as begin work on their master's degrees in criminal justice.