



Fitchburg State University

Board of Trustees Meeting

Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees Meeting

Published on September 5, 2023 at 9:11 AM EDT

Date and Time

Tuesday September 12, 2023 at 8:15 AM EDT

Location

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

Notice of a meeting of the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees on Tuesday, September 12, 2023 at 8:15 a.m. in Presidents' Hall, Mazzaferro Center, 291 Highland Ave., Fitchburg, MA 01420

Agenda

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
I. Opening Items			8:15 AM
Opening Items			
A. Record Attendance and Guests			1 m
B. Call the Meeting to Order		Deborah Phillips	1 m
C. Public Comments			3 m
D. Approve Minutes from the June 6, 2023 Meeting - VOTE (01-23/24)	Approve Minutes		1 m

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
II. President's Assessment and Goals			8:21 AM
A. President's Goals Performance 2022-2023 Academic Year	Discuss		8 m
B. Accept the President's Goals Assessment for AY2022-2023 - VOTE (02-23/24)	Vote		1 m
C. President's Goals AY2023-2024	Discuss		8 m
D. Accept the President's Goals for AY2023-2024 - VOTE (03-23/24)	Vote		1 m
III. Notifications			8:39 AM
A. Personnel Actions (N01-23/24)	FYI		1 m
IV. Student Trustee Report			8:40 AM
A. Allison Turner will provide the Student Trustee Report			5 m
V. Chair's Report			8:45 AM
A. Debbie Phillips will provide the Chair's Report.	FYI		5 m
B. Board Retreat date - June 4,5 or 6 2024	Discuss		3 m
C. Board Effectiveness Retreat per NECHE	Discuss		5 m
D. Student Life Sub Committee Meeting on 9/19 at 8:15 a.m. (need to appoint a Chair)	Discuss		5 m
E. Conflict of Interest	FYI		3 m
The form will be sent to each Trustee electronically for completion.			
VI. President's Report			9:06 AM
A. Opening of the university	FYI		5 m
B. Enrollment Data	Discuss		5 m

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
C. Admissions/Financial Aid/Marketing	Discuss		5 m
D. Student Equity	Discuss		5 m
E. Budget Updates	Discuss		5 m
F. State Audits	Discuss		5 m
G. Institutional Advancement	Discuss		5 m
H. Financial Sustainability Task Force	Discuss		5 m
I. Infrastructure/Technology	Discuss		5 m
J. Revisit Chartwell's Proposal	Discuss		5 m
VII. Informational Items			9:56 AM
A. Welcome Back Powerpoint			5 m
B. By-Laws with amendment	FYI		1 m
C. Financial Aid Eligibility	FYI		1 m
D. Cyber Security Training	FYI		1 m
E. Police Academy Graduation 9/15 at 11:00 a.m. Weston Auditorium	FYI		1 m
F. DHE Trustee Convening - Tentative date - Thursday, November 9 - Doubletree, Westborough	FYI		
G. News Articles	FYI		5 m
VIII. Closing Items			10:10 AM
A. Adjourn Meeting	Vote		1 m

Coversheet

Approve Minutes from the June 6, 2023 Meeting - VOTE (01-23/24)

Section: I. Opening Items
Item: D. Approve Minutes from the June 6, 2023 Meeting - VOTE (01-23/24)
Purpose: Approve Minutes
Submitted by:
Related Material: Minutes for Board of Trustees Meeting on June 6, 2023
VOTE Minutes.doc.pdf

DRAFT



Fitchburg State University

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday June 6, 2023 at 8:15 AM

Location

Presidents' Hall
Mazzaferro Center
291 Highland Avenue
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Notice of a meeting of the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees, Tuesday, June 6, 2023 at 8:15 a.m.

The meeting will take place in Presidents' Hall, Mazzaferro Center, 291 Highland Ave., Fitchburg, MA 01420

Trustees Present

A. Turner, C. Stimpson, D. Phillips, D. Tiernan, E. Gregoire, J. Flanagan (remote), K. Spinelli, L. Barrieau, M. Fiorentino, Jr., S. King-Goodwin

Trustees Absent

None

Ex Officio Members Present

R. Lapidus

Non Voting Members Present

R. Lapidus

Guests Present

A. Tourigny, B. Copper-Glenz, C. Bullis, D. Feldman, D. Feldman, E. Christian, G. Doiron, G. Doiron, J. Bry, J. Hanselman, J. Murdoch, J. Wolfman, L. Bayless, M. Bruun, P. Marshall, P. McCafferty, P. Weizer, R. Diakite, R. Toomey, S. Dodd, S. Goodlett

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

D. Phillips called a meeting of the board of trustees of Fitchburg State University to order on Tuesday Jun 6, 2023 at 8:16 AM.

C. Public Comments

Dr. Rala Diakite, MSCA Chapter President read a prepared statement:

The proposed AY 24 budget projects a deficit of almost 4 million dollars, as a result of continued enrollment decline and increased utility costs, plus the financial burden of underutilized dorms, and our building debt payments. The budget narrative proposes few mitigations around those issues, but rather seeks the greatest savings from reductions in compensation costs, largely on the academic side of the house, along with some new revenues drawn from fee increases to students.

Other avenues for cost savings must be vigorously explored. We should be examining **any large expenses** to see to what degree they are serving and aligned with our mission - this could include services from EAB and other Ed Tech companies, the continual purchasing of new properties with consequent debt load, and addition of upper management positions and inflation of their titles and salaries.

We should seriously consider putting the Theatre Block on hold - a suggestion made by many respondents to the Financial Sustainability Task Force survey. Given our current budget deficit, this huge project of regional economic development, with tenuous connection to our academic programs and student success, is a distraction that drains our energy, diverts fundraising efforts, and has cost us more than 2 million dollars in AY22, and probably more in AY23.

On the revenue side, we can seek increased profit from our buildings (dorms and other facilities), increased fundraising and grants, and a marketing plan. We could start by defining our unique value proposition and advertising that.

Allowing faculty/librarian positions to remain unfilled, as the primary method of achieving efficiencies, is a dangerous path. This will weaken the ability of Fitchburg State to deliver the high quality education that is our mission. Finding the proper student-faculty ratio for our current circumstances cannot be done simply by a mathematical equation. With the multiple demands on faculty/librarians, there is a tipping point, after which the student-focused work of teaching and advising can no longer be carried out in a satisfactory way by the smaller number of instructors and librarians.

Nor is the shrinking of faculty ranks through attrition a logical solution to our current issue. It cripples programs randomly, weakening even large programs, impeding the growth of small but successful ones and presenting obstacles to carrying out curricular renewal. It may have unintended consequences, which we will only notice when it is too late. In sum, when students can't find the programs they want, and courses they need to graduate they will go elsewhere.

MSCA encourages management to put academics first, teaching and learning first, students first. Academic Affairs should have a primary role in guiding our institution safely through this moment of change and uncertainty. We must prioritize our mission as an institution of higher learning.

The MSCA encourages management to develop a more holistic financial plan, one that will seek efficiencies and new revenue from all areas equally, so as to safeguard the **vitality and viability of our academic enterprise**. The MSCA opposes any budget that blindly chips away at the academic heart of our university, without reflecting on the consequences of such a path.

D. Approve Minutes from the Board of Trustees March 28, 2023 - VOTE (40-22/23)

L. Barrieau made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 03-28-23.

S. King-Goodwin seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

D. Phillips	Aye
D. Tiernan	Aye
E. Gregoire	Absent
K. Spinelli	Aye
S. King-Goodwin	Aye
J. Flanagan	Aye

Roll Call

M. Fiorentino, Jr. Aye

C. Stimpson Aye

L. Barrieau Aye

A. Turner Aye

II. Chartwells New Format

A. Required Commuter Meal Plan - VOTE (41-22/23)

The President reported the actions by the Budget, Finance and Facilities Committee.

E. Gregoire joined the meeting at 8:23 a.m.

The President talked about the Chartwells presentation that involved increased customization and various food options. The university would be the first in the system and in the New England area if this new model was implemented. Chartwell's will contribute \$5.5 million to the investment and another \$880,000 over the ten-year process to build out the primary space. Modernization of Hammond Hall and McKay would follow.

The model works, as explained, if all students were included. Commuters would be required to pay a mandatory fee of \$120 per semester for 11 meals each semester. He asked the Board to approve the plan to allow for the project to begin and launch in fall of 2025. He reported that commuter group information sessions were held and that student commuter input was solicited on the required meal plan.

A vigorous discussion ensued.

D. Tiernan asked if the estimate on the construction model was vetted. J. Bry responded that he was comfortable with the number.

M. Fiorentino asked how the computer students were involved. L. Bayless stated that they targeted various groups, lots of different identities, there was a focus group set up just for commuters, and they talked with orientation leaders. She said virtually everyone was very enthusiastic.

A. Turner expressed displeasure with the groups that were reached out to on this. She spoke about the online students and commuters and felt that there was not enough effort to reach out to commuters. She stated that the administration has not reached out to the base majority of commuter students. L. Bayless acknowledged that what A. Turner said was true, that students who take online courses only would not come to campus and would not use the meal plan.

D. Phillips said this was discussed at the finance meeting.

E. Gregoire inquired if this would be the first model of its kind. The President responded that this is a model that Chartwells has used in Europe with success. J. Bry added that a required meal plan would be a first in the system. E. Gregoire expressed that he opposed the plan at the finance meeting and remains opposed. E. Gregoire reminded the Board of the food pantry on campus and the numbers of commuters on campus that are struggling to plan for the tuition, fees and other related costs of attending college. An additional burden which they will not take advantage of seemed unreasonable. The students will feel the costs and this will be an additional barrier, and felt the messaging is troubling.

A. Turner attended a recent Alumni Board meeting and stated that there was a unanimous resolution that the Alumni Board does not support the mandatory meal plan. She said that if the students were seeking this options that would be different. They are not opposed to dining operations; the financing should not be on the backs of commuter students.

A. Turner read a prepared statement: I ask that it please be stated on the record that I oppose a required commuter meal plan. With 50% of our classes now being online and an increasing number of transactional students, it is wrong for us to charge what is now the majority of our student body. Approximately 65% of our student body are commuters and they are commuters for various reasons. However, as a commuter you make the decision that you are majority of the time not going to eat on campus and if you do, you pack or buy your lunch. Approximately 46 commuters currently opt in to have a meal plan, 46.

Furthermore, there was not seemingly increased efforts to reach out to commuters to see if they are interested in having a plan like this. A meeting with commuters was set up, cancelled and rescheduled for Friday and as most I am sure experience not many people come on to campus on Fridays so no one showed up. Furthermore, the groups that were contacted were majority residential student based. Orientation Leaders, members of SGA, and those who work for housing are on campus for large periods of time. The students that are going to be affected by this are our transactional students who do not spend large periods of time on campus. As such, I ask that members of the Board vote no, on requiring a commuter meal plan.

D. Tiernan made a motion to approve a required commuter meal plan, effective for the fall semester 2024.

J. Flanagan seconded the motion.

S. Goodwin King asked what the charge would be. The response was \$120.00 per semester.

The motion did not carry.

Roll Call

M. Fiorentino, Jr.	No
L. Barrieau	No
D. Phillips	No
J. Flanagan	Aye

Roll Call

S. King-Goodwin	Aye
D. Tiernan	No
E. Gregoire	No
C. Stimpson	Aye
A. Turner	No
K. Spinelli	Aye

III. Finance and Administration Committee**A. FY2024 Budget Narrative**

J. Bry presented and discussed the FY2024 Budget Narrative. He highlighted the differences in the budget from earlier this year, and stated that there will be no state fair share monies at this juncture. He noted that there is an expectation that something will come out of the fair share act, but that it is uncertain at this time. He indicated that the state will fund a larger portion of collective bargaining. There is a fee increase included in this budget and he predicts that it will be the lowest compared to our sister schools. He discussed the fund balances and stated that they are sufficient to pay our debt service out into the future. He next talked about the unknowns of the state budget. He talked about the day salaries, showing an increase in collective bargaining which is still not finalized. The budget is based on the 4% pay raises in the fall and 4% at the beginning of the new year. He talked about fringe benefits. Operating funds were discussed and that the Recreation Center debt was paid off. He noted that both innovation funds were funded. He talked about rising utilities and fuel costs. He reported on the finances of the School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education. There were two positions added to SGOCE given the increase in international students to support admissions and the computer science program. All other budgets were level funded. He talked about deficits expected over the next few years. The enrollment number is budgeted at 2193, which is down from last year, but currently on target to be reached. Residence Halls are operating around 60% occupancy. He talked about moving Herlihy Hall over to the Commonwealth books although we are still carrying approximately \$2 million of debt. The university continues to work on Residence Hall vacancies. Further detail on individual funds was presented.

A discussion ensued regarding consultant services, Academic Partnerships, operating expenses, gas, utilities, construction and deferred maintenance, salaries and fringe benefits.

B. FY2024 BOT Budget Summary

This was discussed during the presentation.

C. FY2024 BOT Trust Fund Summary

This was discussed during the presentation.

IV. FY2024 Budget Votes

A. DAY Undergraduate Fee Increases - VOTE (43-22/23)

C. Stimpson made a motion to approve the day undergraduate fee an increase of \$62.50 per semester.

K. Spinelli seconded the motion.

A. Turner read a prepared statement:

I ask that it please be stated on the record that the student body and myself oppose the increase of any fees. Before I get into my rationale for why I am against the increasing of fees, I would like to acknowledge that I understand the purpose of the propose fees. I understand that given the current enrollment situation and decreasing number of residential students at our university, we must adjust our financials accordingly. However, as the representative of the student body, I would remise if I do not stand here and tell you all that I am worried. I am worried about the burden that increasing these fees will put on our already struggling student bodies.

As such, I ask that my fellow board members take a moment to truly understand the ramifications of what is being asked of you all today. At Fitchburg State, our students are more work oriented than any other college students, I have encountered. When talking to students, they will tell you how they work two sometimes three jobs just to make ends meet. Our students are not just students either. Our students include a wide diverse group of people who have different backgrounds. Sitting next to you in class you may find the new mother who travels via train from Boston for class, because she can no longer live on campus. You may find the senior veteran who has come back to school after many years and found a passion in writing for the newspaper. You find first gen college students who are proving to their families that it is possible to go to college, when it wasn't a thought for any of the others.

These are our students and they are worried about how they are going to pay for college as it continues to get more expensive. These are the students and families who plan ahead and save for the next year. It is these students who are waiting to find out how much their first bill is going to cost. It is June 6th, and in about three weeks our first payment for next semester is due. However, these students still do not know how much they are going to have to pay. Instead, they are stuck waiting on us, because we cancelled our meeting. And while it is not anyones fault, there is something to be said about it being wrong for us to put fees on these students so late.

In 2020, this very board unanimously approved our university's strategic plan. In this plan one of the core value emphasize is Affordability. The strategic plan states that the goal of our university is to, "Provide opportunities for students of varying socioeconomic backgrounds to pursue an affordable, quality education." How, can we say that we value affordable education, as we continue to make it inaccessible.

I will leave you all with a quote that Former Trustee Catuela found while preparing for our last increase, that was never used. I want you all to consider this quote from our Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren “College students today are drowning in debt, and it is hurting them and hurting our economy. We must find a way to help families pay for college without condemning them to a lifetime of indebtedness.” When administrators are making the decision to propose fees, or the board of trustees voting on increasing fees, please keep in mind the people who are most impacted, us, the student body.

J. Bry added that he was confident that Financial Aid would cover any fee increases.

The motion did not carry.

Roll Call

L. Barrieau	No
S. King-Goodwin	Aye
J. Flanagan	No
K. Spinelli	Aye
M. Fiorentino, Jr.	No
D. Tiernan	Aye
C. Stimpson	Aye
A. Turner	No
D. Phillips	Aye
E. Gregoire	No

S. King-Goodwin made a motion to approve the day undergraduate technology fee increase of \$62.50 semester.

D. Tiernan seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

C. Stimpson	Aye
D. Phillips	Aye
J. Flanagan	Aye
M. Fiorentino, Jr.	Aye
E. Gregoire	Aye
L. Barrieau	Aye
S. King-Goodwin	Aye
K. Spinelli	Aye
D. Tiernan	Aye
A. Turner	No

B. SGOCE Technology Fee Increase - VOTE (44-22/23)

C. Stimpson made a motion to approve an increase of \$1.00 per credit for the SGOCE undergraduate technology fee, and \$1.00 per credit for the SGOCE graduate technology fee, effective for the fall semester 2023.

S. King-Goodwin seconded the motion.

The motion did not carry.

Roll Call

E. Gregoire	No
M. Fiorentino, Jr.	No
D. Phillips	Aye
L. Barrieau	No
J. Flanagan	No
A. Turner	No
S. King-Goodwin	Aye
C. Stimpson	Aye
D. Tiernan	Aye
K. Spinelli	Aye

C. International Student Service Fee - VOTE (45-22/23)

L. Barrieau made a motion to approve the creation of a new fee, an International Student Service Fee. • SGOCE International Student Service Fee - \$125 per semester • Day Undergraduate International Student Service Fee - \$125 per semester These new fees will be effective for the fall semester 2023.

D. Tiernan seconded the motion.

The motion did not carry.

Roll Call

L. Barrieau	No
K. Spinelli	Aye
C. Stimpson	Aye
S. King-Goodwin	No
J. Flanagan	No
D. Tiernan	Aye
D. Phillips	Aye
M. Fiorentino, Jr.	No
E. Gregoire	No
A. Turner	No

D. SGOCE Graduate Prior Learning Credit - VOTE (46-22/23)

M. Fiorentino, Jr. made a motion to approve the creation of a Graduate Prior Learning (PLA) credit, effective for the fall semester 2023. • Graduate Prior Learning Credit - \$195 per credit.

C. Stimpson seconded the motion.

The prior learning credit process was discussed.

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

Roll Call

D. Phillips	Aye
S. King-Goodwin	Aye

Roll Call

C. Stimpson Aye
D. Tiernan Aye
A. Turner Aye
L. Barrieau Aye
K. Spinelli Aye
E. Gregoire Aye
J. Flanagan Aye
M. Fiorentino, Jr. Aye

E. CPS Community Music Lesson Fee Increase - VOTE (47-22/23)

L. Barrieau made a motion to recommend the CPS Community Music Lesson fees shown below, effective for the fall semester 2023. DURATION 5 LESSONS 15 LESSONS 30 minutes \$165 \$330 \$495 45 minutes \$248 \$495 \$743 60 minutes \$330 \$660 \$990.

C. Stimpson seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

J. Flanagan Aye
E. Gregoire Aye
L. Barrieau Aye
A. Turner Aye
D. Phillips Aye
D. Tiernan Aye
S. King-Goodwin Aye
K. Spinelli Aye
C. Stimpson Aye
M. Fiorentino, Jr. No

F. ALFA Fees - VOTE (48-22/23)

K. Spinelli made a motion to approve the following ALFA fees, effective for the fall semester 2023. • ALFA classes - \$45 per class • ALFA salon discussion groups - \$20 per class.

C. Stimpson seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

D. Tiernan Aye
C. Stimpson Aye
A. Turner Aye
D. Phillips Aye
J. Flanagan Aye
L. Barrieau Aye
K. Spinelli Aye
S. King-Goodwin Aye

Roll Call

M. Fiorentino, Jr. Aye
E. Gregoire Aye

G. FY2024 Budget - VOTE (42-22/23)

S. King-Goodwin made a motion to approve the FY2024 Budget as presented by the President.

K. Spinelli seconded the motion.

The vote was taken with the caveat that prior no votes would modify the bottom line of the budget.

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

Roll Call

L. Barrieau No
K. Spinelli Aye
E. Gregoire No
J. Flanagan Aye
D. Tiernan Aye
A. Turner Aye
C. Stimpson Aye
D. Phillips Aye
S. King-Goodwin Aye
M. Fiorentino, Jr. Aye

H. Merge N91 and N93 Capital Funds - VOTE (49-22/23)

K. Spinelli made a motion to approve the merging N91 and N93 capital funds and the continuation of the capital debt fees associated N91 and N93. N91 is the capital fund that was specifically used for the recreation center, which is now paid off. Merging N91 into N93 will allow for both those funds to be used for capital debt service, effective July 1, 2023.

E. Gregoire seconded the motion.

E. Gregoire asked how much is in the balance of N91. The response was \$2.8 million, with merging accounts the total would be \$10.6 million.

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

Roll Call

M. Fiorentino, Jr. Aye
K. Spinelli Aye
D. Tiernan Aye
E. Gregoire Aye
J. Flanagan Aye
S. King-Goodwin Aye
C. Stimpson Aye

Roll Call

L. Barrieau Aye
D. Phillips Aye
A. Turner Aye

I. Roll Forward of Funds to FY2024 Budget - VOTE (50-22/23)

K. Spinelli made a motion to approve that ongoing capital projects roll forward into the FY2024 University Budget.

L. Barrieau seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

M. Fiorentino, Jr. Aye
C. Stimpson Aye
E. Gregoire Aye
S. King-Goodwin Aye
D. Phillips Aye
K. Spinelli Aye
L. Barrieau Aye
A. Turner Aye
J. Flanagan Aye
D. Tiernan Aye

V. Financial Sustainability Plan - Phase 1

A. Receive Report - VOTE (54-22/23)

The President presented and discussed the Financial Sustainability Plan - Phase 1 report. At the beginning of the spring semester the administration convened a taskforce of faculty and staff to review options for cost reduction and suggestions for revenue generating activities. The president indicated that he thought the report was well done and reasonably comprehensive with input from all campus constituencies. He briefly highlighted the five categories that were examined. The report reflects that the next step is refinement and the identification of items in each of the five categories that have a chance to move the needle. He noted that the range of ideas included those that were very complex to items that were relatively small. The next taskforce will take a look at everything. People will be asked to work through the summer and continue in the fall semester. A report will be due at the conclusion of the fall semester.

M. Fiorentino first thanked the taskforce, and stated that they did a great job. He remarked that he got a sense of three themes repeated throughout the report: planning, transparency, and communication. Again, he appreciated their work.

E. Gregoire expressed the same conclusions from reading the report. From his vantage point, he stated that we are confronted with enrollment challenges, and we are seeing this now. We are still in stiff headwinds in this region. Some of these items suggested in

the report would be easier to implement. The reality is that enrollment is not going to become easier, further declines are expected and we need to become more agile, we need to be a lot more flexible.

The President added that there are already of number of items proposed in the report that are already in process.

M. Fiorentino commented that at some point, as these activities continue, there will be a meeting of the minds. The President agreed.

M. Fiorentino, Jr. made a motion to receive the Financial Sustainability Report.

C. Stimpson seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

C. Stimpson	Aye
S. King-Goodwin	Aye
K. Spinelli	Aye
E. Gregoire	Aye
D. Phillips	Aye
D. Tiernan	Aye
A. Turner	Aye
L. Barrieau	Aye
J. Flanagan	Aye
M. Fiorentino, Jr.	Aye

VI. Finance Dashboard

A. Current Finance Dashboard

The dashboard was submitted for informational purposes.

VII. Slate of Officers

A. VOTE (51-22/23)

The committee met this morning and discussed the slate of officers for the next fiscal year.

K. Spinelli made a motion to approve the following slate of officers effective July 1, 2023: Chairman – C. Deborah Phillips Vice Chairman – Lynn Barrieau Clerk – David Tiernan.

C. Stimpson seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

K. Spinelli	Aye
A. Turner	Aye
C. Stimpson	Aye

Roll Call

S. King-Goodwin Aye
L. Barrieau Aye
E. Gregoire Aye
D. Phillips Aye
D. Tiernan Aye
M. Fiorentino, Jr. Aye
J. Flanagan Aye

VIII. By-Laws Amendment

A. Amend by-laws to provide for a review of the by-laws every five years - VOTE(55-22/23)

D. Phillips stated that NECHE asked that the Board commit to reviewing the by-laws on a regular basis and that a formal statement should have been included when the most recent by-laws were adopted.

L. Barrieau made a motion to adopt the attached amendment to the by-laws by adding a provision to Article IV, Miscellaneous, providing for the review of the bylaws no less than every five years as set forth in the attachment. ARTICLE IV. MISCELLANEOUS These Bylaws may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Trustees by a two-thirds vote of the members present, due notice of such amendment having been given in the call to the meeting. These Bylaws shall be reviewed no less than every five years by the Board of Trustees. The Chair may nominate a committee to perform this review and report its recommendations to the full board.

M. Fiorentino, Jr. seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

D. Phillips Aye
K. Spinelli Aye
L. Barrieau Aye
J. Flanagan Aye
A. Turner Aye
M. Fiorentino, Jr. Aye
S. King-Goodwin Aye
E. Gregoire Aye
D. Tiernan Aye
C. Stimpson Aye

IX. Notifications

A. Personnel Actions (N09-22/23)

The notifications were presented for informational purposes.

B. Financial Statements (N10-22/23)

The Financial Statements were presented for informational purposes.

There is a correction to the statements that will be circulated at a later date.

X. Student Trustee Report

A. Allison Turner will provide the Student Trustee Report

A. Turner read her report:

I have a few quick updates about SGA Elections, as well as a quick thank you.

Student Government held our annual elections and we welcomed in a new executive board led by President Kervance Blanc. For those who do not know Kervance, he is a rising star and student leader as he is only going into his Sophomore year. I am truly excited to see what Kervance brings to the table and how he leads the Student Government Association. Potentially good news also potentially bad news depending on how you take it. I was elected to continue in my role as Student Trustee. I hope that by continuing in this position, myself and members of this board can continue to work to make sure that Fitchburg State is the best possible environment for our students. I did not get to accomplish it as much as I would like, but I truly believe that as a member of this board, we must have an understanding of the students that attend our institution. As such, I hope that we can please work together in the creation of opportunities for this board to get to know our students.

Lastly, I wanted to thank the board of trustees for an excellent year. I have learned so much about how our university functions and higher education in general. There are so many more people that I could thank and have helped me grow and develop. However, I am going to save that for when you are truly done with me next spring. I look forward to continuing to work with you all this next semester.

XI. Chair's Report

A. C. Deborah Phillips will provide the Chair's Report

The Chair had nothing to report.

XII. President's Report

A. COVID-19 Update

The President reported that we concluded the year with low COVID activity. The COVID memorandums of understanding have or will expire. The university will transition back to pre-COVID days.

B. End of the Year Activities

The President reported on the end of year activities that included Convocation, Nursing Pinning and Commencement. All were well received and it was wonderful to see the community come back together. It appears we are returning to normal activities.

C. Academic Calendar 2023-2024

The academic calendar was presented for informational purposes.

D. News Articles

The news articles were presented for informational purposes.

XIII. Executive Session

A. VOTE (56-22/23)

L. Barrieau made a motion to enter into executive session in accordance with MGL c. 30A, Section 21 (a)(1) to discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual in relation to the sabbatical leave provision within the terms of Article XV, Section C of the MSCA and BHE collective bargaining agreement. (other information withheld under MGL c. 214, Section 1B right to privacy) The Board will return to open session.

E. Gregoire seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

L. Barrieau	Aye
E. Gregoire	Aye
D. Phillips	Aye
S. King-Goodwin	Aye
D. Tiernan	Aye
J. Flanagan	Aye
M. Fiorentino, Jr.	Aye
C. Stimpson	Aye
A. Turner	Aye
K. Spinelli	Aye

XIV. Executive Session Discussion

A. VOTE (57-22/23)

Open session reconvened at 10:39 a.m.

L. Barrieau made a motion to approve that it has been presented with reasons satisfactory to excuse a faculty member from the requirements of Article XV, Section C of the MSCA and BHE collective bargaining agreement relative to the completion of service following a sabbatical and approves the request.

K. Spinelli seconded the motion.

The motion did not carry.

Roll Call

M. Fiorentino, Jr.	No
J. Flanagan	No
D. Phillips	No
E. Gregoire	No
C. Stimpson	No
S. King-Goodwin	Absent
K. Spinelli	No
D. Tiernan	No
A. Turner	No
L. Barrieau	No

XV. 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 10:39 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
D. Tiernan

Documents used during the meeting

- VOTE Minutes.pdf
- VOTE - Required Commuter Meal Plan.pdf
- Budget Narrative FY2024.pdf
- FY24 BOT Budget Summary.pdf
- FY24 BOT Budget Trust Fund Summary.pdf
- VOTE - DAY Undergraduate University Fee Increase.pdf
- VOTE - SGOCE Technology Fee Increase.pdf
- VOTE - International Student Service Fee.pdf
- VOTE - SGOCE Graduate Prior Learning Credit.pdf
- VOTE - CPS Community Music Lesson Fee Increase.pdf
- VOTE - ALFA Fees.pdf

- VOTE - Budget FY2024.pdf
- VOTE - Merge N91 and N93 Capital Funds.pdf
- VOTE - Roll forward of funds to FY2024 budget.pdf
- FSTF Phase 1 Report .pdf
- Financial Sustainability VOTE.pdf
- FY24-Master Data Sheet-Dashboard-BoT.pdf
- VOTE Slate of Officers.doc.pdf
- ByLaw Revision Timeline.pdf
- Proposed Bylaw Amendment (3).pdf
- Report 06062023 Personell Notifications.pdf
- FSU_MAR 31 2023-Financial Statement with Executive Summary.pdf
- 2023-2024 Academic Calendar.pdf
- June 2023 News Clips.pdf
- VOTE Executive Session June 6, 2023.pdf
- VOTE Executive Session Discussion June 6, 2023.pdf

**Fitchburg State University
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

TO: Board of Trustees	DATE: September 12, 2023
FROM: The President	REQUEST NUMBER:
SUBJECT: June 6, 2023 Board Meeting minutes	01-23/24

It is requested that the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees vote to approve the minutes from the June 6, 2023 Board Meeting.

Coversheet

President's Goals Performance 2022-2023 Academic Year

Section: II. President's Assessment and Goals
Item: A. President's Goals Performance 2022-2023 Academic Year
Purpose: Discuss
Submitted by:
Related Material: Presidential Evaluation Summary Document 2022-23 RSL (1).pdf

Goals for the 2022-23 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 endemic.

- Covid-19 cases during the year were relatively low
- All terms of bargaining unit MOU's were honored
- Tracked all new hire/contractor vaccinations to assure compliance with our policies
- Continue to track weekly testing for employees that were not vaccinated
- The campus was supplied PPE and sanitizer as needed
- Campus vaccine clinics were held
- Housing was supplied for residential students for those that contracted Covid-19

2. Maintain sound financial management and operational controls.

Finance Accounting

- Successfully completed the transition of Foundation Audit to a new Auditing Firm
- Received clean audits for all entities
- Implemented the new GASB Standard 87; a major undertaking as it addressed leases that included all the MSCBA Residence Hall debt

Advancement

- Raised from gifts, grants, pledges and bequests nearly \$6.6 million
 - \$4.3 million in grants from state, federal and private foundations up from FY22 \$3.24 million. \$3,363,988 grants pending
 - \$2.3 million in philanthropic giving (2300 contributions from 1,800 donors), up from FY22 \$1.67 million
 - 21 new endowments incentivized by state match program were created this year with \$1.3 million pending
 - Two planned giving appeals were sent this year resulting in 22 new Saxifrage members with the largest bequest being \$1.5 million
 - Payroll deductions from faculty and staff hit the \$10,000 mark this year
 - Continued to work in support of the theater

Finance Budgeting

- Continued to update and expand budget trainings for staff and new chairs

- Collected, organized and began the review and updating of all Internal Control Policies, Financial Policies and Procurement Policies
- Collaborated with HR on implementation of the BANNER HR module including Position Control
- Worked collaboratively with all units on campus on the Financial Sustainability taskforce exercise

Student Accounts

- Federal Perkins Loan program close-out. All files reviewed and assigned except one partial. Final return of funds/payback will occur with audit activities to finalize with FY23 Audit
- HEERF review by State Auditors - successfully provided all documentation and records correct/accurate/no findings as related to student refunds and funds disbursements
- Implemented on-line forms for student activity, including Title 4 Authorization in Banner; increasing convenience for students and reducing paper processes

Procurement

- Implemented middle-tier procurement threshold and process - Quick Quote for purchases priced between 10-25K
- Created and launched new vendor on-boarding package as an electronic document - assists with data entry accuracy, and increased speed
- Enhanced website with procurement information, including place for bid/RFP notices, and recording contract awards

Materials Management

- Completed RFID tagging of 75% of active inventory equipment and completed FY23 inventory of assets
- Updated several hundred IT equipment records for older assets no longer in service and/or previously in service
- Developed "electronic" ping process to inventory computers when they log onto the campus system, and to use that for updates in asset tracking system

EHS/Risk Management

- Established management practices involving the use of a new work-order system for tracking/reminders
- Updated drone policy and donation policy for academic equipment/materials (e.g., chemicals, equipment, etc.)
- Conducted a full audit of all custodial closets and updating and posting MSDS/safety packages for each closet
- Established standard trainings for employee on-boarding for EHS related items and made Spanish language programs available

IT

Core Services

- Updated DegreeWorks internally without using consultants, a savings of \$40,000
- Created an automated track for student photo population into the Rec. Center system
- Deployed Civitas College Scheduler integrated with Banner to enhance student class scheduling
- Encrypted all data at rest stored on university servers
- Completed 30 dynamic forms that automatically route and require approvals for the campus

User Services

- Transitioned from McAfee to Sophos threat detection software for all endpoints on campus. This has already thwarted one hacking attempt successfully
- Updated eight classroom media systems internally without using consulting
- Began testing and rollout of Windows 11 to increase security and functionality
- Upgraded all credit card systems to ensure compliance with new PCI standards
- Upgraded the University Police system including patrol cars/mobile systems to the latest version
- Migrated WinTix event ticketing system to the cloud
- Implemented a new Integrated Library Platform (Alma), a new discovery layer (Primo), a redesigned Library website, research guides, and an innovative service called “Controlled Digital Lending”
- Launched new registration software, College Scheduler

OneCard

- Completed refresh of registers on campus to comply with new PCI laws
- Created new OneCard design and template for all incoming students
- Confirmed and restricted devices from accessing the PCI network by MAC addresses to increase security on that segmented network
- Added new wireless locks during building refresh with CPM so that door security can be centrally and automatically controlled

Networking

- Refreshed the core network system and designed the new access layer to replace hardware that is no longer supported
- Turned on Two Factor authentication for network management systems
- Completed a port reduction project that will significantly reduce the number of switches that will need to be replaced
- Installed new phone system firewalls to offload voice calls onto managed hardware for our remote switch
- Began rollout of port-level authentication and security for hard-wired network ports, significantly enhancing security on campus

Security

- Rolled out a comprehensive online security training program and conducted in-person training for staff and faculty
- Enabled Sophos EDM malware protection for servers
- Enabled Google Two Factor authentication for all users - including students
- Began work on a centralized login portal for all users that will automatically provision (and de-provision) access based on user roles
- Upgraded exiting SIEM solution to SilverSky with no increase in cost

Payroll Services

- Processed three years of retroactive contractual raises for all benefitted employees during FY22 and FY23- sending and filing letters, updated payroll cards for over 600 employees
- Focused on student workers - working in collaboration with International Education, Financial Aid, and SGOCE to revamp the student workers webpage
- Created a new student timesheet guide for website and conducted student timesheet training replacing the antiquated TCD swipe card machines across campus
- Established a training session for the maintainer staff and created a system to train all new benefitted employees upon hire on attendance process and self-service capabilities in HRCMS
- Created new dynamic forms including a payment voucher for CPM, Direct Deposit, and meal sheet for AFSCME employees
- Created and distributed Payroll Posts and added a "helpful hints" section
- Worked on a new HR/Payroll Calendar
- Scanned all active payroll folders internally. Payroll files are now all electronic

3. Continue the implementation of strategic initiatives as articulated in the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.

Recruitment

- Finalized numerous articulation agreements to facilitate the seamless transfer of students to Fitchburg State, including:
 - Rhein-Waal University of Applied Sciences (Economics/International Business)
 - Husson University (Dr. of Physical Therapy [DPT])
 - MA College of Pharmacy & Health Services (DPT)
 - Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School
 - Mount Wachusett CC (Allied Health, Liberal Arts/Pre-Law)
 - Bunker Hill CC (English, Global Languages)
 - Bristol CC (Game Design)
 - Holyoke CC (CJ/Police Program)
 - Lynn Vocational Technical Institute (Radio and TV Broadcasting)
- Granted Early College designation for the Athol School District by the joint authority of DHE/DESE. (This designation expands our existing Early College scope with high

schools in Fitchburg, Leominster, Gardner, Sizer School, and Templeton's Narragansett Regional High School)

Retention

- Piloted Embedded Tutoring Program in Anatomy & Physiology and Chemistry for the Health Sciences
- Increased number of Academic Integrity Initiatives, including regular library workshops for international students, online tutorials embedded in FYE courses, and professional development sessions for faculty
- Increased the number of faculty participating in and converting their course materials to Open Educational Resources and Open Pedagogy
- Successfully conducted Falcons Helping Falcons and other individualized communication campaigns for non-registered students
- Enhanced support for academic advising in collaboration with the CTL and ACT
- Facilitated student engagement with ACT by creating individualized tutor appointment campaigns in NAVIGATE for students with incompletes, attendance alerts, and Midterm Deficiency Alerts
- Scholarships awarded: 248 awards presented at Convocation totaling \$250,285

Assessment

- Completed Association for Advancing Quality in Education Preparation (AAQEP) self-study for 10 undergraduate and graduate programs in Education
- Launched assessment of the new General Education program for Learning Outcomes in Information Literacy, Reading, Writing, and Integrative Learning (NECHE commitment)
- Mapped goals of Academic Plan to Key Performance Indicators in the campus Strategic Plan
- Concluded Program Reviews with Action Plans for two departmental programs

Curricular Innovation

- Received unanimous BOT approval for MS in Construction Management, with unanimous approval for fast-track by the Board of Higher Education (6/20/23)
- Launched new Digital Media Innovation program, with 8 declared majors in first year and 10 additional applicants not yet registered (vs 5 anticipated majors in the first year, per the Letter of Intent)
- Developed and successfully passed through governance an interdisciplinary Data Analytics Minor
- Developed and successfully passed through governance a new concentration in Information Systems Management
- Initiated campus dialogue about generative AI and Chat GPT through the CTL and its Summer Institute
- Online History graduate program named an OnlineU "most affordable online degree in History"

Expanding/Enhancing External Partnerships

- Expanded the number of industry/agency partnerships for student internships and other high-impact practices. Select partnerships include:
 - AIS, Inc
 - MassBioEd
 - MA Biomedical Institute
 - Tough Stuff Recycling
 - UMass Chan
 - UMass Health Alliance
 - AGC-MA
 - ESPN (New Britain, Connecticut)
 - Skydance Films (Hollywood, California)
 - Fablevision Studios (Boston and Dedham)
 - NBC Marketing (New York)
 - Warner Brother Games (Boston)
 - Anderson Ranch Art Center (Snowmass, Colorado)
 - MA Department of Children and Families
 - Habitat for Humanity
 - United Way Youth Venture
 - MA Department of Mental Health
 - MA Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS)
 - Nantucket Police Dept. (Community Service Officer)
 - MA Department of Correction
 - Massachusetts Trial Courts
 - Public school systems of Fitchburg, Leominster, Gardner, Westminster, Lowell, Athol/Roylston, Worcester
 - Aging Services of North Central MA (providing 25 paid internships)

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

- **Leading for Change**
 - Continued to fund DEI efforts through the Identity-Based Programming Fund Supported 16 initiatives in the categories of:
 - Bringing experts and thought leaders to campus to engage and challenge with keynote addresses
 - Providing opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to learn and grow
 - Supporting entertainment, space making, and books
 - Addressed issues raised in the PRIDE Index submission
 - Starting an active LGBTQ+ alumni group
 - Identifying LGBTQ+-friendly employment and workplace information for internships, career services, and job opportunities in conjunction with Career Services
 - Advertising LGBTQ+-focused events to encourage community attendance
 - Promoted policy and practice audits with a DEI lens by funding external consultants to assist departments with using the rubric created in 2021-22

- Launched an Inclusive Hiring Initiative to expand and diversify applicant pools, ensure position descriptions are communicating what we intend, expanding information in the hiring guides, and requiring all employees to take implicit bias training
- Conducted a climate survey, which is in the process of being analyzed
- **Center for Diversity and Inclusiveness**
 - Total attendance at events was 3,638 reflecting a participation increase of 31% from the prior year
 - Total number of visitors to CDI was 1,872 reflecting approximately a 25% increase from the prior year
 - Expansion of identity-based student organizations (African Student Union, First Love Organization and Asian Student Organization)
- **Mental Health Support and Initiatives**
 - Counseling Services saw a lower number of individual students accessing services this year, but a greater number of individual sessions. The number of counseling sessions provided this year was 2006 with the mean number 6.7 sessions per student
 - The JED Campus self-study initiative is well underway, and the Campus Task Force was able to complete, and submit, its initial *Baseline Assessment*.
 - A train-the-trainer program for Mental Health First Aid took place in January, 2023, and 16 staff members at Fitchburg State participated in a three-day training to become certified trainers for this program
 - Toward the conclusion of the Spring 2023 semester, Christie Campus Health (a third-party vendor intended to provide an array of services to all our students) went “live”
- Housed 8 homeless students through the Moving to College Program. Scheduled to house 10 students in 2023-24
- Increased programming Thursday through Sunday branded as “Flock to the Weekend” to increase vibrancy on campus
- Used the “Swipe it Forward” grant (\$3000) to fund Combat Hunger to Summer Orientation
- Reestablished Alternative Spring Break with a trip to Puerto Rico

4. Conclude the current NECHE 10-year accreditation process and begin work as recommended for the next review cycle.

- The NECHE 10-year accreditation process was successfully completed
- The university received a positive report and a 10-year renewal
- Work on the next cycle is in progress per their guidance
- Built a system to track milestones and record completion of NECHE initiatives

5. Continue to work on student enrollment goals.

Admissions

- Successfully implemented use of the Common Application and Naviance in an effort to increase opportunities for students to connect and apply to Fitchburg State. Increased number of applications (1100+) over last year
- 807 deposits this year up from last year's 690 at the same time (+17%.)
 - 636 first-time freshman students (budgeted 515 students)
 - 171 transfer students (budgeted 192 students)
- Housing occupancy - budgeted 62% (1057) current 62.55 (1066)
- Adjusted the review timeline for new student applications for admission. Application review began in September, with first acceptance packets being mailed in October
- Created a new packet for students when notifying them of their offer of acceptance. This included additional information on the benefits of living on campus to help increase the number of residential students
- Collaborated with the Honors Program for transition to early notification in October. Applications increased by +582 compared to fall 2022 for a total of 74 students
- Adjusted the timeline and process of all merit scholarships. Merit scholarships are now awarded at the time of decision and are included in the student's acceptance letter. Prior to this merit scholarships were awarded only once a year in mid-February
- Increased the number of campus visit options to further enhance yield of admitted students including specific events for programs
 - More Saturday Information Sessions each month which includes staff from Financial Aid and Residential Life as presenters
 - Twilight Tour offerings in both fall and spring terms for approximately 6 weeks
 - Specialized program events (e.g., Honors, Communications Media)
- Increased partnership with University Athletics providing access and training to the CRM platform for all coaches. Additionally, provided support to in-person recruitment programs
- Created transfer student specific events to meet the needs of transfer students which often have different questions and situations compared to those of traditional first-year students
- Increased yield programming by inviting admitted students to on-campus events such as plays, music and dance events, and athletic games. This effort was intended to establish a connection to student life and a heightened sense of belonging

Financial Aid

- Presented and attended more financial aid awareness and information sessions at area high schools. These outreach activities served to demystify the financial aid application process
- Expanded the frequency and content of our staff developed Financial Literacy campaigns to current and prospective students
- Increase of student FAFSA filings by 16%

6. Continue to work on campus marketing initiatives.

Marketing

- Created, uploaded, curated over 35,000 visual assets to the university SmugMug image platform. Views of contents surpassing 2,000,000 views
- Utilized content to create 388 posts feeding social media channels
- Staff Assistant earned FAA Part 107 Small Unmanned Aircraft (drone) license - providing new options for creation of visual elements
- Developed and managed a 365-day content calendar for all social media platforms
- Created themed website header videos each quarter of the year; 4 new video segments Reached follower goals
 - Instagram to over 5,000
 - TikTok 1,000
- Created Social Media Ambassadors (new program; 21 student volunteers) to gather more student content and student life content on campus
- Completed two (2) successful “Flat Freddy Challenges” for the campus community. This successfully engaged our student population, but also greatly expanded our followers to our platforms
- Produced summer course content for SGOCE and marketed summer term to all followers
- Negotiated and provided content for all digital marketing campaigns, Google search, display, and remarketing ads
- Worked with the Office of Admissions and external vendors to redesign Admissions collateral, including a new search piece and viewbook
- Worked with university colleagues to develop a brand submission process with university designers and Print Services to ensure all representations of Fitchburg State University comply with brand elements and expectations.
- Reviewed current virtual tour, made recommendations for edits, and created a shot list to update imagery and 360s presentations
- Facilitated all creative production for logos and admissions collateral for *Game On!* partnership
- Website editing, the collection and distribution of university-related photos for university use, and the university’s social media platforms, and provided direction for regular content updates to those platforms

Communications and Public Affairs

- Posted more than 130 news articles to our website of which more than 90
- were press releases shared with our general media mailing list
- Posted more than 60 stories to the website, including features published in print in *Contact* magazine
- Preparing to launch the new digital magazine platform and a compact print product that directs viewership to the new site
- Produced 17 editions of the campus newsletter, Fitchburg State University Today. This internal newsletter includes summaries of campus news and directs staff, faculty and self-selecting readers to notable campus happenings

- Produced a monthly Parent Newsletter

Alumni Engagement

- Organized 57 alumni events (30 on campus and 27 across the country engaging 1,306 individuals)
- PCI Oral History Project: total respondents: 4,467; total stories collected: 3,113; total money raised: \$6,075; total number of donors: 223

7. Continue to evaluate the campus organizational structure in support of the university mission.

Human Resources

- Implemented Banner HR/Finance Position Control to be tested over this next AY with Finance. The position control should provide the university a clear representation of the position, history and salary
- Implemented implicit bias training and highlighted strategic objectives as outlined in the Strategic Plan to emphasis the diversity goals in hiring policy
- Onboarded 50 new staff hires
- Oversaw executive searches for the new Executive Director for Housing and Residential and Services, Associate Vice President for Capital Planning and Maintenance, Director for Operations & Maintenance
- Established a personnel actions rubric for consistency across HRCMS/Banner/Workflows
- Established a new online requisition process for new position and replacement requests for the managers and senior staff. It will allow one system to be used to capture the request and to house the information
- HR/Payroll have started to create a Manager 101 Handbook
- Created dynamic forms for AFSCME evaluations and grievances, CORI, emergency contact, tuition and flexible work

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

- Completion of Thompson Hall renovation (1st and 2nd floors)
- Completion of Miller Oval Roof replacement/waterproofing
- Residence Hall projects (carpet and interior painting completed in townhouses 1-7, repainting of Mara Village units 1-5, new hot water systems in Cedar House and Simonds Hall)
- Demolition of four unsightly properties
- Theater Block storefront renovations
- Work on a new roof and other improvements in Weston Auditorium are underway
- A new roof for Holmes Dining Commons is underway
- Upgrades to the Edgerly Data Center are underway

- A building study is being conducted in anticipation of a major renovation to Conlon Hall

9. Continue to strengthen university/community relationships.

- The University has placed significant effort on strengthening alumni relations with support of the Alumni Association
- Continued to strengthen connection with the Fitchburg Art Museum with programing and sponsorship support
- The university produces a monthly Alumni E-Newsletter and Fitchburg State Magazine
- The university has worked with the City of Fitchburg on infrastructure planning around the downtown main street area (Intown Fitchburg)
- Sizer School - Board of Trustees
- Fitchburg Art Museum - Board of Trustees
- Chamber of Commerce - Board of Directors / Treasurer
- Cushing Academy - Board of Trustees
- NCAA Division III Presidents Council
- EAB| Presidents Advisory Council
- Recognized as the Distinguished Citizen by the Heart of New England Scouting Council. Awarded to community leaders who provide outstanding civic service to adults and/or youth in the community

Coversheet

Accept the President's Goals Assessment for AY2022-2023 - VOTE (02-23/24)

Section: II. President's Assessment and Goals
Item: B. Accept the President's Goals Assessment for AY2022-2023 - VOTE
(02-23/24)
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material: VOTE Accept the President's Goal Performance for 2022-2023.pdf

**Fitchburg State University
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

TO: Board of Trustees	DATE: September 12, 2023
FROM: The President	REQUEST NUMBER: 02-23/24
SUBJECT: Accept the President's Goal Performance for AY2022-2023	

It is requested that the Board of Trustees accept the performance appraisal summary of the president by the Chair for AY2022-AY2023 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.

Coversheet

President's Goals AY2023-2024

Section: II. President's Assessment and Goals
Item: C. President's Goals AY2023-2024
Purpose: Discuss
Submitted by:
Related Material: President's - Goals 2023-24 RSL .pdf

Goals for the 2023-24 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.**
 - Work with auditors to complete financial audit
 - Complete Phase 2 of the Financial Sustainability Taskforce exercise and determine actionable next steps
 - Work toward meeting the proposed budget outlined for FY25
 - Continue to build on grant and philanthropic efforts
- 2. Continue the implementation of strategic initiatives as articulated in the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.**
- 3. Continue to implement and met milestones as articulated in the NECHE report for the next review cycle.**
- 4. Continue to work on student enrollment goals.**
 - 540 first-time full time UG and 204 new transfer students
 - Continue to work on improving our UG returning student retention rate and related metrics
 - Continue to build the graduate program and international student participation
 - Continue to improve upon DHE system level goals
- 5. Continue to work on campus marketing initiatives.**
 - Strengthen the university image and brand
 - Focus efforts on the benefits of student life and a residential experience
 - Expand and diversify touch-points
 - Continue to expand storytelling
 - Build out new Fitchburg State Magazine
- 6. Continue to evaluate the campus organizational structure in support of the university mission.**
 - Continue to work on position control
 - Seek operational efficiencies to further reduce cost

- 7. Oversee ongoing capital projects and advocate for additional funding to address deferred maintenance and renovation need as appropriate.**
 - Implement the Gordian study recommendations
 - Seek alternative sources of funding in support of capital projects (grants, philanthropy).
- 8. Continue to strengthen university/community relationships.**

Coversheet

Accept the President's Goals for AY2023-2024 - VOTE (03-23/24)

Section: II. President's Assessment and Goals
Item: D. Accept the President's Goals for AY2023-2024 - VOTE (03-23/24)
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material: VOTE President's 2023-2024 Goals.pdf

**Fitchburg State University
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

TO: Board of Trustees	DATE: September 12, 2023
FROM: The President	REQUEST NUMBER: 03-23/24
SUBJECT: Accept the President's Goals for AY2023-2024	

It is requested that the Board of Trustees accept the President's goals for AY2023-2024.

Coversheet

Personnel Actions (N01-23/24)

Section: III. Notifications
Item: A. Personnel Actions (N01-23/24)
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: Personnel Actions Sept. 12, 2023.pdf

TO: Board of Trustees
 FROM: The President
 SUBJECT: Personnel Actions

DATE: September 12, 2023
 NOTIFICATION NUMBER: 01-23/24

Hires

Alyssa Annese, BS Effective: 8/14/2023	Staff Associate, Event Operations Manager (10 month) TRIO SSS (replacement)	\$41,000.00
Justin Casinghino, PhD Effective: 9/1/2023 End: 5/31/2024	Assistant Professor (One year Temp) Humanities	\$62,000.00
Angela Cruz-Guzman, MS Effective: 8/21/2023	Staff Associate, Event Operations Manager Capital Planning and Maintenance (replacement)	\$77,500.00
Travis Giard, BS Effective: 7/31/2023	Staff Assistant, Sports Information Director (10 month) Athletics (replacement)	\$50,000.00
Mary Gowdy, MED Effective: 6/26/2023	Director of Graduate Admissions, International Coordinator School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education (new)	\$67,000.00
Heath Hightower, PhD Effective: 9/1/2023 End: 5/31/2024	Assistant Professor (One year temp) Behavioral Science	\$66,000.00
Julia Kempster, MA Effective: 8/7/2023	Staff Assistant, Counselor (10 month) Counseling Services (replacement)	\$50,750.00
Abigail Kilcommins, MS Effective: 6/26/2023	Staff Assistant, Mental Health Disability Specialist (temp/grant) Disability Services (new, grant funded)	\$70,000.00
Lucy Lee, MS Effective: 7/24/2023	Staff Assistant, Accountant Financial Services (replacement)	\$82,500.00

Lori Leonard, MA Effective: 9/1/2023 End: 5/31/2024	Assistant Professor (One year temp) Mathematics	\$63,000.00
Xiaoying Meng, MA Effective: 9/1/2023 End: 5/31/2024	Assistant Professor (One year temp) Communications Media	\$72,000.00
Gene Peterson, BA Effective: 8/21/2023	Staff Assistant, Accountant Financial Services (replacement)	\$84,000.00
David Rilett, MA Effective: 9/1/2023 End: 5/31/2024	Assistant Professor (One year temp) Computer Science	\$65,000.00
Kimberly Smalley, MS Effective: 7/10/2023	Associate Director for Library Access Services Library (replacement)	\$69,000.00
Kayla Thomas, MA Effective: 9/1/2023 End: 5/31/2024	Assistant Professor (One year temp) Nursing	\$68,000.00
Samantha Walters-Sweeney, MED Effective: 7/10/2023	Staff Associate, Instructional Coordinator for Foundational Mathematics Mathematics (replacement)	\$55,000.00
Mairead Weagle, BS Effective: 8/14/2023	Staff Assistant, Coordinator of Greek Life and Programming Student Development (replacement) <i>** One year temp (expires 6/28/24)</i>	\$47,000.00
Resignation		
Wendy Arena Effective: 6/2/2023	Instructor Nursing	\$69,706.80
Kristina Baker Effective: 7/21/2023	Staff Assistant, Human Resources Coordinator Human Resources and Payroll Services	\$62,500.00

Tahkeya Blake Effective: 8/23/2023	Associate Director Admissions	\$68,666.40
Robin Chataut Effective: 8/12/2023	Assistant Professor Computer Science	\$72,307.80
Barbara Farrington Effective: 5/31/2023	Instructor Nursing	\$63,750.00
Philip Fennel Effective: 8/25/2023	Staff Assistant, Area Coordinator Housing and Residential Services	\$47,214.08
Joseph Ferguson Effective: 6/16/2023	Director for In Town Fitchburg In Town Fitchburg/President's Office	\$68,527.51
Andrew Klein Effective: 7/28/2023	Director of Community Standards Student Affairs/Conduct	\$76,500.00
Sean McNalley Effective: 6/23/2023	Associate Director Housing and Residential Services	\$63,984.61
Henry Parkinson Effective: 9/8/2023	Dean of Students Student Development	\$119,646.00
Jennifer Scott Effective: 9/15/2023	Staff Assistant, ASL/English Staff Interpreter (PT/9 month) Human Resources and Payroll Services	\$23,563.12
Steve Swartz Effective: 8/5/2023	Associate VP/CIO Technology	\$186,538.89
Leave/No Pay		
Adam Elveren Effective: 9/1/2023 End: 5/31/2024	Associate Professor Economics, History and Political Science	\$74,724.43

Salary Adjustment

Jennifer Abbott Effective: 7/1/2023	Assistant Director, ACT Academic, Coaching and Tutoring Center	From: \$52,700.91 To: \$56,700.91
Michelle Cota Effective: 6/19/2023	Associate Director of Student Accounts Student Accounts	From: \$72,828.00 To: \$75,928.00
Andrew Cunningham Effective: 7/3/2023	Staff Assistant Marketing and Integrated Communication	From: \$54,060.00 To: \$57,060.00
Stefan Dodd Effective: 7/1/2023	Director, Chief Technology Officer Technology	From: \$109,778.39 To: \$113,778.39
Andrea Johnston Effective: 5/29/2023	Associate Director Financial Aid	From: \$74,648.70 To: \$76,148.70
Kat McLellan Effective: 7/1/2023	Director, ACT Academic, Coaching and Tutoring Center	From: \$74,648.70 To: \$82,500.00
David Niemi Effective: 7/1/2023	Staff Assistant Technology	From: \$66,769.29 To: \$72,500.00
Kelly Norris Effective: 8/28/2023	Director of Product Marketing Marketing and Integrated Communication	From: \$97,797.60 To: \$105,809.50
Erin Ross Effective: 8/28/2023	Director of Procurement and Contracts Financial Services	From: \$90,000.00 To: \$98,600.00
Erin Turchetta Effective: 7/1/2023	Director of Enrollment for Graduate and Continuing Education School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education	From: \$83,713.19 To: \$88,713.19
Ann Weaver Effective: 6/19/2023	Director, Simulation Laboratory (10 month) Nursing	From: \$75,480.00 To: \$77,480.00

Promotion

Kristina Braun Effective: 8/7/2023	From: Administrative Assistant II, ACT Center To: Associate Director, Housing and Residential Services Housing and Residential Services	From: \$54,486.90 To: \$72,000.00
Stefan Dodd Effective: 8/7/2023	From: Director, Chief Technology Officer To: Assistant Vice President, CIO Technology	From: \$113,778.39 To: \$145,000.00
Brooke Morgan Effective: 8/7/2023	From: Staff Assistant, Risk and Emergency Manager To: Staff Associate, Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Mgr Capital Planning and Maintenance	From: \$84,994.68 To: \$88,500.00
Jennifer Murray Effective: 7/1/2023	From: Staff Assistant To: Assistant Director of Enrollment School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education	From: \$55,453.33 To: \$57,453.33

Rehire

Althea Aranda Effective: 9/1/2023 End: 5/31/2024	Instructor Nursing	\$72,992.57
Arlana Arsenault Effective: 9/1/2023 End: 5/31/2024	Instructor Nursing	\$78,018.44
Karen Beaton Effective: 9/1/2023 End: 5/31/2024	Instructor Nursing	\$70,702.98
Jennifer Dupuis Effective: 9/1/2023 End: 5/31/2024	Instructor Nursing	\$61,258.75

Nancy Green Effective: 9/1/2023 End: 5/31/2024	Instructor Nursing	\$66,715.25
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Christine Oleksyk Effective: 9/1/2023 End: 5/31/2024	Instructor Nursing	\$69,364.08
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Change of Supervisor/Dept.

Pamela Boudreau Effective: 8/28/2023	Staff Assistant, Senior Graphic Designer From: Technology To: Marketing and Integrated Communications	\$67,648.15
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Jamie Cochran Effective: 8/7/2023	From: Staff Assistant, CDI (10 month) To: Staff Assistant TRIO SSS (10 month) From: Center for Diversity and Inclusiveness To: TRIO SSS	\$61,889.41
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Change in Title

Jennifer Hanselman Effective: 7/1/2023	From: Dean of Health and Natural Sciences To: Dean of Health and Natural Sciences and Dean of Business Academic Affairs	\$165,000.00
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Nancy Murray Effective: 7/1/2023	From: Dean of Education and Dean of Business To: Dean of Education Academic Affairs	\$153,563.04
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Interim Pay

Joseph Flanagan Effective: 7/31/2023	Staff Assistant, Case Manager Student Affairs	From: \$55,980.00 To: \$58,241.59
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Julie Maki Effective: 6/5/2023	Staff Assistant (10 month) Disability Services	From: \$53,420.57 To: \$58,620.57
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Brooke Morgan Effective: 5/8/2023	Staff Assistant, Risk and Emergency Manager Capital Planning and Maintenance	From: \$69,394.68 To: \$84,994.68
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Acting Position

Robert Hynes
Effective: 6/4/2023

From: Assistant Dean/Director of Counseling Services
To: Assistant Dean/Director of Counseling Services/Disability Services
Counseling Services/Disability Services

From: \$111,847.56
To: \$118,847.56

Coversheet

Welcome Back Powerpoint

Section: VII. Informational Items
Item: A. Welcome Back Powerpoint
Purpose:
Submitted by:
Related Material: Welcome Back - Fall 2023 - FINAL RSL.pdf

Fall Semester 2023



Incoming Undergraduate Class

- Enrollment
- Diversity
- Residence Halls



Graduate Education

- Enrollment
- Diversity
- Modality



Admissions Updates

- Expanded campus visit opportunities. Event calendar for the next academic year
- New viewbook with the theme of “It’s About YOU”
- Enhanced campus virtual tour
- Virtual series, “College 101 - for Parents.” Topics include financial aid, student life, wellness, transition to campus life, and success.
- Continue expanded travel, accelerated application cycle, and enhancements to scholarship notifications
- Tuition Equity (MGL change) - undocumented students

Financial Aid Updates

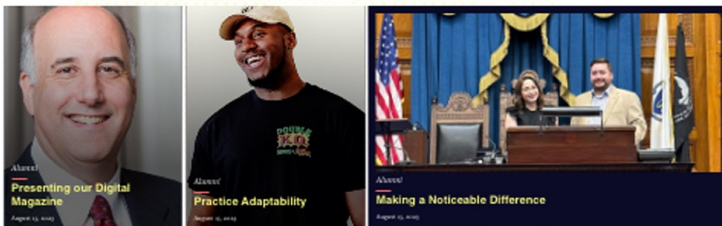
- FAFSA simplification
- Expanded education and counseling for both new and current students to reflect the changes to the federal and state financial aid resources
- Development of new awards and packages as well as the adaptation to the new timeline established by FAFSA simplification

Marketing Updates

- Renewed efforts to offer options to all university partners to ensure brand awareness and usage guidelines
- Refinement of services provided by Print Services as they transition to the Division of Enrollment Management
- Continued expansion of new social media platforms; the launch of a new university THREADS account and expansion of existing platforms
- Further expansion of visual elements stemming from drone certification of our campus photographer
- Development and launch of the new digital magazine, and expanded use of this branded storytelling

FITCHBURG STATE MAGAZINE

FALCONS ARE SOARING



FITCHBURG STATE MAGAZINE

Class Notes

Name: Search

1950s

Barbara (Benham) Campbell '59

was selected as the Grand Marshal for the 2023 Rutland 4th of July parade.

1970s

Mary F. Cringan '77, '84

has been selected as one of the 2023 Commonwealth Heroines. The Commonwealth Heroines Celebration is an opportunity to recognize the women who don't always make the news but who are truly making a difference in their communities, businesses, or volunteer endeavors.

1980s

Robert A. Hall '80

has published a new book, *Quotes for the Conservative Heart*.

Do

was

In Memoriam

Name: Search Issue: Summer 2023 Decade:

1940s

Claire E. (Letendre) Formwalt '45 of Fayetteville, Ga., on December 28, 2022. Read an obituary for [Ms. Formwalt](#).

Patricia M. (Supple) Going '44 of Leominster, on August 25, 2022. Read an obituary for [Mrs. Going](#).

Rev. Bertrand H. Steeves '49 of Newburyport, on September 18, 2020. Read an obituary for [Rev. Steeves](#).

1950s

Robert "Bob" E. Bloomfield '54 of Amherst, NH, on February 10, 2023. Read an obituary for [Mr. Bloomfield](#).

John P. Capuano '58 of Worcester, on December 5, 2022. Read an obituary for [Mr. Capuano](#).

Barbara (Westerman) W. Finkel '57 of Springfield, in February 2023. Read an obituary for [Mrs. Finkel](#).

Judith A. Clarke (Maculiewicz Or) Grabenbauer '57 of Sebastian, Fla., on May 13, 2023. Read an obituary for [Mrs. Grabenbauer](#).

Richard Mantyla '58 of Sarasota, Fla., on May 22, 2022. Read an obituary for [Mr. Mantyla](#).

Norman W. May '50 of Denton, TX on April 24, 2023.

Shari "Bob" McDermott '58, '63 of Fitchburg, on January 28, 2023. Read an obituary for [Mr. McDermott](#).

Donald R. O'Connor '59 of Westfield, on January 4, 2023. Read an obituary for [Mr. O'Connor](#).



A Passion for Science

Alumni • Summer 2023 • August 15, 2023 • By Matthew Bruun

Crystal McKinnon '11 found lifelong mentors at Fitchburg State.



- f
- in
- tw
- en

For Crystal McKinnon '11, who would become the first member of her family to complete a college degree, the path was not always clear. She graduated from Gardner High School with strong grades and numerous college acceptances, but had to find a way to balance school and the three jobs she was working to pay for it.

"Fitchburg State was the one school I could afford and still live my life," she said. "There, you can do it, and people understand."

She wasn't sure where her dawning educational journey would take her, though she sometimes thought about becoming a high school French teacher. "I had no idea what I wanted to do when I started at Fitchburg State, but I enjoyed the courses," she said. "I didn't have a declared major until halfway through my sophomore year."

That's when her love of science crystallized and a track presented itself. "All of the faculty there are doing what they love, and they're passionate about what they're doing," said McKinnon, who has kept in touch with several of her former professors and still counts them as mentors.

FITCHBURG STATE MAGAZINE

Recent Stories Past Issues Sections

- Class Notes
- In Memoriam
- Alumni
- Academics
- Student Stories
- Faculty

Alumni

Flying High but Staying Grounded

Paul Cormier '93 doesn't forget where he came from

Just Keep Moving

Student Stories • Summer 2023 • August 15, 2023 • Matthew Bruun

Christopher Shaddock '23 is a survivor.

- f Christopher Shaddock believes in the importance of forward motion and has learned not to let obstacles derail him.
- in A self-described "late, late bloomer," Shaddock has followed a winding path toward his degree.
- tw He had worked jobs in radio and food service when he decided, at age 28, to enlist in the U.S. Army (he celebrated his 29th birthday in basic training).
- en "I always like a challenge," he recalled. "I get bored."



Shaddock spent eight years in active duty for the Army, including assignments in Kentucky and Germany before his reactivation following the terror attacks of 9/11 led to deployments to Iraq and Kuwait.

Following his discharge, Shaddock continued seeing the world. He lived for 11 years in Iceland, where his then-wife was from, and eventually moved back to the U.S.

"I kept going despite wanting to give up, and a few times I almost did."

Christopher Shaddock '23

A tinkerer since his youth, Shaddock began studying automotive technology and applied science at Mount Wachusett Community College, where he graduated in 2020. In the midst of his studies, he was diagnosed with Stage 4 prostate cancer.

Practice Adaptability

Alumni • Summer 2023 • August 15, 2023 • By Matthew Bruun

Denzel Weatherspoon '19 having "unreal" experience in professional game design

- f Even if you don't play video games, you've probably heard of the immensely popular online game Fortnite. Developed by Epic Games, Fortnite boasts more than 250 million average monthly players as of 2023, with more than 25 million people playing it every day.
- in
- tw
- en

This Spring, Epic Games announced the new Unreal Editor for Fortnite (UEFN), which will let content creators within Fortnite do even more to build interactive worlds shared between players.

Among the team members who worked on the new Unreal Editor were 10 graduates of Fitchburg State's game design program, including Denzel Weatherspoon '19. Weatherspoon has worked for Epic Games since 2022, most recently as a quality assurance analyst.



FITCHBURG STATE MAGAZINE



FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

FITCHBURG STATE
MAGAZINE

Making a Noticeable Difference

Alumni • [Summer 2023](#) • August 15, 2023

• By Matthew Bruun

Stephanie (Fielding) Marchetti

Flying High but Staying Grounded

Alumni • [Summer 2023](#) • August 15, 2023

• By Matthew Bruun

Paul Cormier '93 doesn't forget where he came from



FY24 State Budget Highlights:

- **Line items (all numbers are aggregate and do not reflect the campus allocation):**
 - \$175,650,000 for the state scholarship program
 - \$1,000,000 for the state university internship incentive program
 - \$2,000,000 for state universities mental and behavioral health services
 - \$9,820,456 for the state university funding formula
 - \$5,000,000 for the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative
 - \$15,150,000 for early college development and initial implementation
 - \$12,600,000 to fund early college/dual enrollment programs
 - \$1,000,000 for public higher education hunger-free campus initiative
 - \$300,000 for PACE

FY24 State Budget Highlights (Cont.):

- **Line items funded by Fair Share dollars (all numbers are aggregate and do not reflect the campus allocation):**
 - \$84,000,000 for scholarship program for public higher education students
 - \$50,000,000 for deferred maintenance
 - \$20,000,000 for MassReconnect
 - \$25,000,000 for high demand scholarships for public higher education students
 - \$5,000,000 for state universities endowment incentive program
 - \$5,000,000 for the expansion of early college, workforce, technical and innovation pathway programs
 - \$12,000,000 for capacity building efforts for free community college
 - \$18,000,000 for community college nursing student scholarship.

Institutional Advancement

- Raised from gifts, grants, pledges and bequests nearly \$6.6 million
 - \$4.3 million in grants from state, federal and private foundations (\$3.24 million in FY22)
 - Received 2,138 contributions from 1,193 donors for a total of \$2.3 million (\$1.67 million in FY22)

Institutional Advancement (Cont.)

- 21 New endowments incentivized by state match program were created this year for a total of about \$1.3 million received with another \$1.3m pending
- 248 awards given at Convocation totaling \$250,285 in scholarships
- Travel grants through the CIC scholarship and Global Ambassador have assisted over 50 students traveling to Japan, Germany, Peru, Italy, Puerto Rico and Spain for \$119,350 awarded
- Payroll deductions from faculty and staff have hit the \$10,000 mark this year
- 57 alumni events; 30 on campus; 27 across the country, engaging 1,306 alums through these events.
- During "Go Falcons Challenge" 75 student athletes contacted over 1,000 former athletes and friends/families to secure over \$17,000 for their respective programs from more than 300 unique donors.

State Audit Results

- Areas of review:
 - Distribution of Pandemic Relief Funds - No findings
 - Cyber Security Practices - One minor finding regarding tracking of training participants. Concern has been addressed



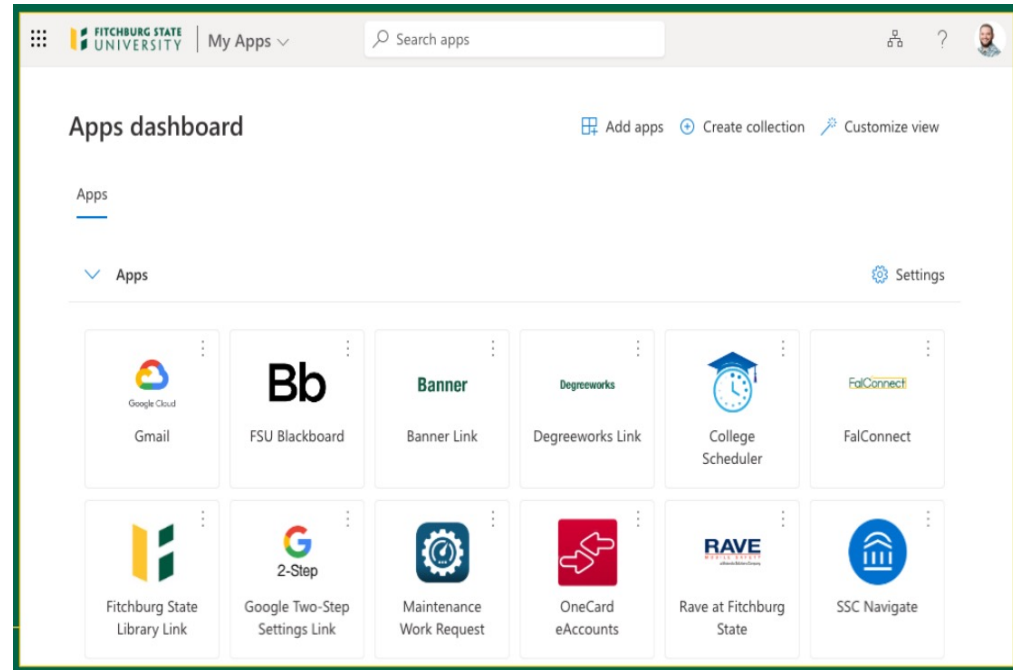
Financial Sustainability Task Force - Phase 2

- Academic Efficiencies
- Administrative Efficiencies
- Entrepreneurship and Revenue
- Property and Infrastructure
- Student Services

Single Sign-On Login Portal

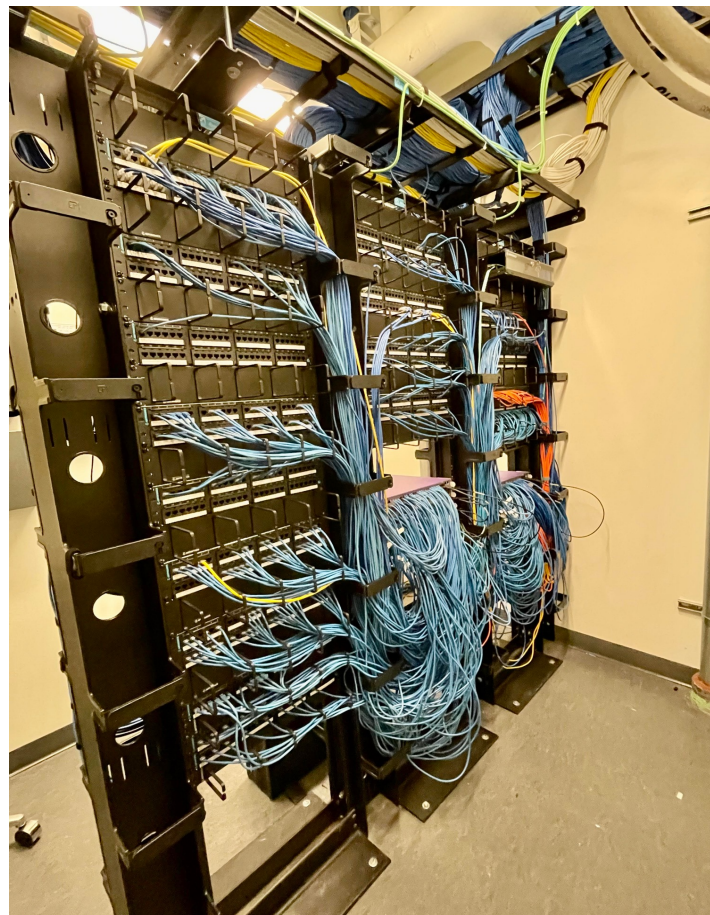
<https://login.fitchburgstate.edu>

- Centralized hub for accessing SSO applications via Microsoft Authentication
- More applications will be added in the future (e.g., Banner, Degreeworks, and SSB)
- This platform is presently accessible to faculty, staff, and students, with our student-focused marketing efforts just beginning.
- MFA will be enforced for students on October 10th and Faculty and Staff on February 13th
- Google MFA will no longer be a requirement



Network Refresh Highlights

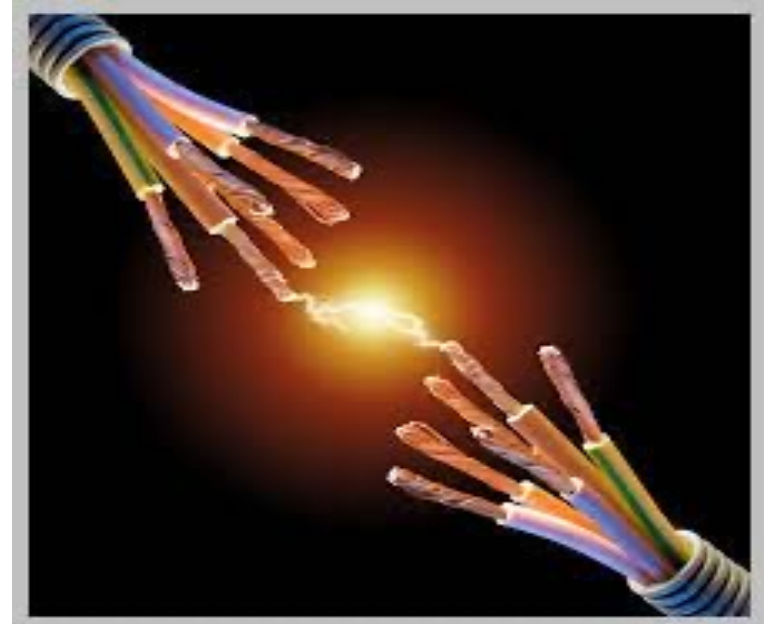
- Comprehensive upgrade encompassing the replacement of all network building stacks and Wireless Access Points (WAPs)
- The newly implemented building network increases uplink speed 10-fold, while Wi-Fi performance has been enhanced threefold
- Will be introducing Wi-Fi 6E SSIDs in the fall season with an even more accelerated Wi-Fi experience for compatible devices
- Wired ports were minimized resulting in cost optimization.



Campus Infrastructure

Projects completed:

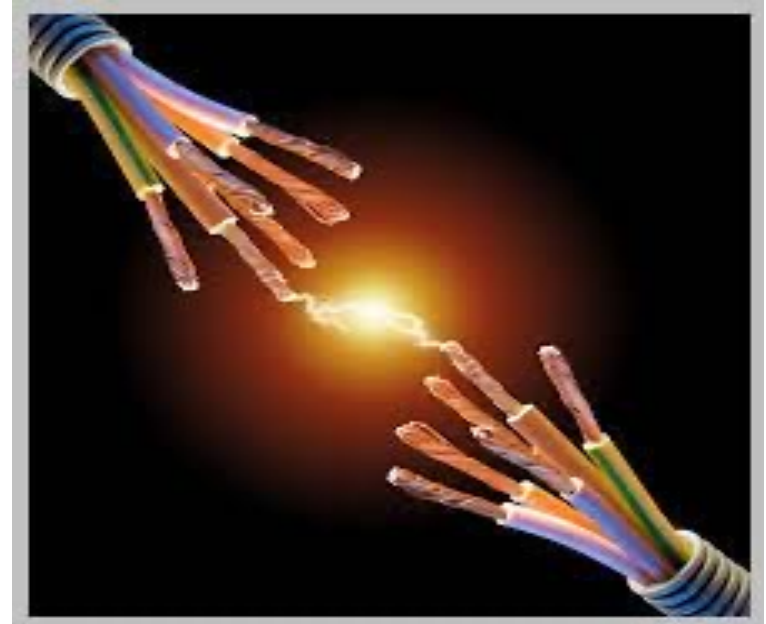
- Thompson Hall renovation first and second floors
- Residence hall projects included new carpeting and interior painting completed in Townhouses 1-7, repainting of Mara Village units 1-5
- New hot water systems in Cedar House and Simonds Hall



Campus Infrastructure (Cont.)

Projects in progress:

- A new roof and other improvements at Weston Auditorium
- A new roof at Holmes Dining Commons
- Upgrades at the Edgerly data center
- A building study in anticipation of major renovations to Conlon Hall



Medical Abortion Bill

- Medication Abortion is an act that expands protections for reproductive and gender-affirming care. It requires the institution to develop a Medication Abortion Readiness Plan.

- MOU with Planned Parenthood
 - Four locations (Boston, Worcester, Springfield & Marlborough)
 - Provide in-person and telehealth abortion services
 - Provide on-going support
 - Provide patient navigation services (transportation, cost of care and others)

Campus Resources

- CARE Team (Community Assessment and Risk Evaluation)
 - Report students of non-academic concern

- Bias Incident Response Team (BIRT)
 - Incidents impacting students, employees, and guests

- Falcon Bazaar Food and Necessities Pantry

- Community Health Connections
 - Campus health partner

- Counseling Services
 - Virtual and in-person sessions. Extended evening hours.

- Falcons Care Website
 - Information about emergency loans and support offices dedicated to helping students navigate barriers



Dates to Remember for Fall Semester

- Rock the Block (9/12 @ 3:30pm)
- Open House (10/14, 10/28, plus other events)
 - Sessions for First Gen students
 - Stem students
 - Honors students
 - Increased weekend and evening info sessions to include Admissions, Financial Aid and Housing
- Homecoming (11/3 - 11/5)
- Lighting of the Campus (11/30 @ 4:30pm)
- Holiday Gathering (12/14 @ 3:30pm)
- Winter Commencement (12/22 @ 6:30pm)



Award for Caring

Curtis Kelley

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION



Service Awards

Let's Have A Great Semester!



Coversheet

By-Laws with amendment

Section: VII. Informational Items
Item: B. By-Laws with amendment
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: BYLAWS Adopted as of Feb. 7, 2023.pdf

BYLAWS

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Approved As Revised, February 7, 2023

ARTICLE I. ORGANIZATION AND OFFICERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEE

Section 1. Composition and Functions of the Board

The composition, functions, duties, powers and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, its committees, or subcommittees, shall be as provided and authorized by the laws of the Commonwealth as in effect from time to time, subject to such rules, regulations, policies, or guidelines as the Department of Higher Education may, from time to time, adopt, or repeal for the management, control, administration, or regulation of the system of public higher education, or any part thereof. In recognition of the Department of Higher Education's Equity Agenda, the Board of Trustees shall strive to consider the furtherance of diversity, equity and inclusion in the exercise of its powers and responsibilities.

Section 2. Officers of the Board

The officers shall consist of a Chair, a Vice Chair, and a Secretary.

Such officers shall be elected by the Board of Trustees at its annual meeting upon nomination by the Nominating Committee as provided in Article III, section 5, or otherwise, and they shall hold office until the next annual meeting or until their respective successors are elected.

Section 3. Duties of the Officers

A. The *Chair* of the Board of Trustees shall have the following duties:

1. To preside at all meetings of the Board of Trustees.
2. To call special meetings of the Board of Trustees.
3. To serve ex-officio, with voting power, as a member of all standing committees of the Board of Trustees.
4. To appoint all standing committees, a Nominating Committee and other special committees of the Board of Trustees and to appoint the chairs thereof.

B. The *Vice Chair* of the Board of Trustees shall have the following duties:

To perform the duties of the Chair of the Board of Trustees at their request or in case of their absence or incapacity.

C. The *Secretary* of the Board of Trustees shall have the following duties:

1. Record the proceedings of the Board of Trustees and of each standing and special committee thereof in a book or books to be kept therefore.

2. Preserve all documents, papers, and records determined by the Board of Trustees to be a part of the official records of the University.
3. Perform duties, not inconsistent with those prescribed by these Bylaws or by the Board of trustees, or as prescribed from time to time by the Chair of the Board.

Section 4. The President of the University

The President of the University shall serve as the Chief Executive and Administrative Officer of the University and shall:

Be the professional advisor to the Board of Trustees on all matters involving the educational programming and governance of the University.

Be responsible for the management of the educational and fiscal affairs of the University.

Serve as ex-officio to the Board and on all of its committees.

Section 5. Associate of the Board

Serving the Board as an Associate shall be an **Assistant Secretary**. The Assistant Secretary of the Board of Trustees shall:

Assist the Secretary in the recording of the proceedings of the Board of Trustees and perform the duties of the Secretary in the event of the absence or illness of the Secretary upon request of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees or the President of the University.

ARTICLE II. MEETINGS OF THE BOARD

Section 1. Regular and Annual Meetings

There shall be a minimum of four meetings a year of the Board of Trustees of Fitchburg State University in the months of September, November, March and May, with the first being the organizational meeting. The May meeting shall also be the Annual Meeting unless otherwise determined by the Board. Ordinarily, the meetings will be held on the first Tuesday of each of these months. The Board shall, however, set the date and time of each meeting at least one month in advance.

Section 2. Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Board may be held at any time and at any place when called:

1. By the Chair of the Board of Trustees, or
2. By the President of the University, or

3. By petition of any five Trustees given in writing to the Secretary.

Section 3. Notice of Meetings

Written notice of each regular meeting of the Board of Trustees shall be given to each Trustee at least five (5) business days prior to the date fixed for the meeting. Notice of special meetings shall be given to each Trustee at least three (3) business days prior to the meeting day. Notices shall state the time and place of the meeting and, as to special meetings the purposes for which it has been called.

Section 4. Agenda of Regular Board Meetings

A written agenda of matters to be considered at each regular meeting of the Board of Trustees shall be sent to each Trustee at least five (5) business days prior to the date fixed for said meeting.

Items to be included in the agenda for a regular meeting shall be submitted in writing by:

1. Recommendation of a standing or other committee of the Board of Trustees.
2. The Chair of the Board of Trustees.
3. The President of the University.

No item shall be included in the agenda for a regular meeting except upon recommendation by a standing or other committee of the Board of Trustees; the Chair of the Board of Trustees or the President of the University

Unless otherwise determined by the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the following shall be the order of business at meetings of the Board of Trustees:

- I. Call to Order
- II. Consideration of Minutes of Prior Meeting
- III. Reports of Standing Committees

IV. Reports of Special Committees including Nominating Committee

V. Presidential Agenda

1. President's Comments
2. Comments by University Staff at Invitation of President

VI. Status of Pending Actions

VII. Other Business

Section 5. Quorum

The number of Trustees necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business shall be a majority of the voting members but a lesser number may adjourn any meeting from time to time, and such meetings may be held as adjourned without further notice. When a quorum is present at any meeting, a majority of the Trustees present may take action on behalf of the Trustees unless a larger number is required by other provisions of these Bylaws. By vote of a majority of Trustees present any meeting may be recessed.

Section 6. Open Meeting Law/Executive Sessions

All meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held in compliance with the State's Open Meeting Law (OML), and any applicable Attorney General's Regulations, including but not limited to remote participation and any Executive Sessions held by the Board. Unless the Board shall otherwise direct, Executive Sessions of the Board shall include the Trustees, the President, and any other person the Board deems necessary or appropriate to provide the Board with information or advice. The Board may meet in Executive Session only for the purposes enumerated in the OML, and to consider the award of honorary degrees.

ARTICLE III. COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Section 1. Standing Committees

There shall be five standing committees of the Board of Trustees:

- A. Academic Affairs
- B. Student Life
- C. Budget Finance and Facilities
- D. Personnel and Human Resources
- E. Executive Committee

A. Committee on Academic Affairs

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 related 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.

B. Committee on Student Life

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

1. To consult with the President and to consider and recommend to the Board of Trustees for action matters pertaining to student life and activity, student services, student government, and the health and wellbeing of the student body.

C. Committee on Budget, Finance and Facilities

The Committee on Budget, Finance and Facilities shall inquire into all fiscal affairs of the University and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees on all matters relating to the financial soundness of the University including budget, internal controls and investment oversight. In addition, this committee shall receive and recommend Board action on all proposed capital projects, financing and debt management, land acquisition and disposition and shall have the following powers and duties:

1. To review and make recommendations to the Board annually or as necessary on the University's operating budget including University trust funds.
2. To review and make recommendations to the Board annually or as necessary on any changes to student fees.
3. To review and make recommendations to the Board, as necessary, for the approval of any debt financing.
4. To review and make recommendations to the Board annually or as necessary on investments including but not limited to the allocation of class parameters, fund manager allocations, and/or any related investment designations or selections.
5. To review and make recommendations to the Board on the annual independent audit of financial statements.

6. To review and make recommendations to the Board, as necessary, on the development and update of plans and policies, including but not limited to capital/master plan, cash management and investment policies, debt policies, and compliance and risk policies.

D. Committee on Personnel and Human Resources

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

1. To consider matters relative to the personnel needs of the University in consultation with the President and make recommendations to the Board as necessary.
2. To consider actions to be taken that are required by the terms of any collective bargaining agreements, policies on staffing patterns, changes in status, and related matters when applicable as recommended by the President and make recommendations to the Board with respect to such matters for Board action.
3. To review when recommended by the President policies related to Human Resources and make recommendations to the Board with respect to such policies for Board action when applicable.

E. The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the Chair, the President, the Vice Chair and the Secretary and it 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.

Section 2. Members of the Standing Committee

Each standing committee shall have such number of members, not fewer than three (3) as shall be appointed by the Chair of the Board at the close of the annual meeting and the Chair of each standing committee shall be appointed by the Board Chair at that time. The Chair of the Board of Trustees and the President of the University shall also be members of each standing committee. Each trustee must be a member of at least one committee.

Section 3. Meetings of the Standing Committees

Meetings of standing committees may be held at any time and at any place when called by

the Chair of the Committee, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, or a majority of the voting members of the committee.

Written notice of each committee meeting shall be given to each Trustee at least five (5) business days prior to the meeting date. Notices shall state the time, place and purpose of the meeting.

Section 4. Agenda of Committee of the Board

A written agenda of matters to be considered at each meeting of a committee of the Board of Trustees shall be sent to each committee member at least five (5) business days prior to the date of the meeting. Items to be included on committee agendas may be submitted in writing by

1. The President of the University or
2. Any Trustee

Section 5. Nominating and Other Special Committees

There shall be a Nominating Committee of the Board of Trustees appointed in March of each year serving until the next meeting. The Nominating Committee shall present at the annual meeting nominees for the posts of Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary.

The Board of Trustees may establish other special committees from time to time to have such duties as it may determine.

ARTICLE IV. MISCELLANEOUS

These Bylaws may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Trustees by a two-thirds vote of the members present, due notice of such amendment having been given in the call to the meeting.

These Bylaws shall be reviewed no less than every five years by the Board of Trustees. The Chair may nominate a committee to perform this review and report its recommendations to the full board.

Coversheet

Financial Aid Eligibility

Section: VII. Informational Items
Item: C. Financial Aid Eligibility
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: Financial Aid Eligibility.pdf

Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

MAIN OFFICE One Ashburton Place, Room 1401
Boston, MA 02108
TEL (617) 994-6950
FAX (617) 727-0955
WEB www.mass.edu

OFFICE of STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE 75 Pleasant Street, Third Floor
Malden, MA 02148
TEL (617) 391-6070
FAX (617) 391-6085
WEB www.mass.edu/osfa

Noe Ortega
Commissioner
Chris Gabrieli
Board Chairman

July 13, 2023

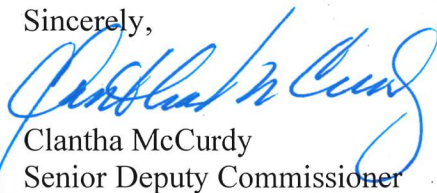
Dr. Richard Lapidus
President
Fitchburg State University
160 Pearl Street
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Dear Dr. Lapidus,

The Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Assistance hereby extends Fitchburg State University's eligibility to participate in Massachusetts State financial aid programs for which it is eligible, for a period of one (1) year, commencing July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024. This extension of eligibility is subject to Fitchburg State University's compliance with the terms of the Participation Agreement it previously signed with the Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Assistance that has been in effect since July 1, 2020. In addition, the institution must comply with any existing or new rules, general provisions or regulations that are specific to any financial aid programs it participates in or that may otherwise govern its eligibility to administer and disburse Massachusetts State financial aid program funds, throughout the entire period of eligibility.

The institution shall retain this letter on file as proof of its eligibility to participate in Massachusetts State financial aid programs during the 2023-2024 academic year.

Sincerely,



Clantha McCurdy
Senior Deputy Commissioner

cc: Jay Bry, VP of Finance / Admin.
Denise Brindle, Director of Financial Aid

Coversheet

Cyber Security Training

Section: VII. Informational Items
Item: D. Cyber Security Training
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: Cyber Security Training.pdf



160 Pearl Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420-2697

Tel 978.665.3101 ▪ Fax 978.665.3699

rlapidus@fitchburgstate.edu

www.fitchburgstate.edu

Richard S. Lapidus, Ph.D.

PRESIDENT

August 8, 2023

Sarah B. Mongeau CPA, CGFM, CFE
Director, Division of Authority and Education Audits
Office of the State Auditor Diana DiZoglio
65 Boston Post Road West
Marlborough, MA 01572

Dear Ms. Mongeau:

On behalf of Fitchburg State University, I would like to thank you and your team for the thorough performance audit of our procedures and policies of our cyber security training. We have reviewed the draft audit report and find no factual misstatements. We have addressed the noted finding related to the documentation of cyber security training and attendance tracking and have already implemented the necessary process to ensure compliance. KnowBe4 online Cyber Security Training software was put into effect in December 2022.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Richard S. Lapidus'.

Richard S. Lapidus
President

cc: Tanya Young, Audit Manager

Coversheet

News Articles

Section: VII. Informational Items
Item: G. News Articles
Purpose: FYI
Submitted by:
Related Material: Clips for September 2023.pdf



Sentinel & Enterprise

Thursday, August 31, 2023 \$2.50 FACEBOOK.COM/SENTINELANDENTERPRISE TWITTER.COM/SENTANDENT

sentinelandenterprise.com

BACK TO SCHOOL

FSU to welcome 800 new students next week

Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » Fitchburg State University is prepared for the upcoming fall semester, welcoming new and returning undergraduate and graduate students. The academic year will feature the launch of new academic programs and a continued focus on supporting student success.

“It has been a busy summer on campus and we are thrilled to welcome students back for robust, in-person learning and extracurricular experiences this fall,” Fitchburg State President Richard Lapidus said. “The university strives to foster a student-ready environment where they are engaged and supported in their academic pursuits, and feel a sense of belonging in our shared community. We look forward to building this



COURTESY FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Fitchburg State University is preparing for the upcoming 2023–2024 school year.

environment from their first days on campus.”

Fitchburg State will welcome approximately 800 new first-year and undergraduate transfer students at the start of the semester, as well as hundreds of new graduate students. The incoming class includes students from 24 states, 20 countries and five continents.

Several new academic programs are launching

this fall, including an interdisciplinary minor in political journalism, serving students interested in journalism, political science, and the role of reporting in democratic societies.

This semester also marks the debut of a new course called “Podcasting the Past,” in which students will collaborate across the disciplines of history and communications to integrate

historical research and story development with audio production. Their work will be released through Perseverantia: the Fitchburg State Podcast Network, which can be found at fitchburgstate.edu/podcast.

The majority of new residential students will move in Monday, Sept. 4 (Labor Day), starting at 9 a.m. from the Wallace Civic Center. The northbound lanes of North Street will be closed to non-university traffic between Pearl and Ross Streets from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. on that date.

The majority of returning residential students will move in Wednesday, Sept. 6. There may be brief road closures around campus between 9 a.m.-5 p.m. that day.

Orientation activities for new students will take place from Sept. 4 to Sept. 6. Fall semester classes will begin Thursday, Sept. 7.

Highlights early in the academic year

The university will host Rock the Block, its 25th annual club and organization fair, at 3:30 p.m. on Sept. 12. One of the most popular student events of the year, Rock the Block connects students with the myriad extracurricular and job opportunities available on- and off-campus.

The sixth cohort of officers will graduate from Fitchburg State’s groundbreaking police program at 11 a.m. Sept. 15 at Weston Auditorium. The new officers, who will take their oaths at the ceremony, completed their bachelor’s degrees in criminal justice in May and are in the process of completing a 17-week academy of defensive skills, tactical training, and classroom work that started earlier in the summer. The academy includes credits to-

ward a master’s degrees for the students that intend to work toward one in the next academic year.

The university will observe Latinx Heritage Month from Sept. 15 through Oct. 15, and will also present programming in observation of LGBTQ History Month throughout the month of October. Additional details will be posted on the university website at fitchburgstate.edu.

The CenterStage arts and culture series welcomes Platinum-selling band Orleans to Weston Auditorium at 7 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 30. Tickets are available at fitchburgstate.edu/centerstage.

The university will celebrate the official Homecoming and Reunion Weekend event from Nov. 3 to Nov. 5. Details are posted at fitchburgstate.edu/homecoming.

To learn more about Fitchburg State and its programs, visit fitchburgstate.edu.

Fitchburg State University



Fitchburg State University, which has served the educational, cultural and workforce development needs of the region and beyond for nearly 130 years, starts its fall semester on Thursday, Sept. 7.

full potential,” University President Richard S. Lapidus said. “Our graduates are leaders in their disciplines and in their communities, in New England and beyond.”

Founded as a teacher-training institution in 1894, Fitchburg State today offers more than 30 undergraduate degrees and more than 20 master’s degree programs, serving 6,000 full- and part-time students with a blend of liberal arts and sciences and professional programs. Its offerings include storied programs in education and nursing, as well as groundbreaking degrees in game design (the first of its kind in a public institution in Massachusetts) and criminal justice, including a concentration that allows graduates to complete certification to work in municipal police departments across Massachusetts and neighboring states. Its global network of alumni now number 50,000.

The university is one of the region’s largest employers with an annual economic impact exceeding \$280 million. Its strategic plan codifies the university’s commitment to helping improve the quality of life in the city and region.

A major investment toward this goal was the university’s purchase and ongoing redevelopment of a long-dormant theater into a vibrant performing arts center, supporting a larger, collaborative vision for the city’s evolution as an arts and culture destination. Still in its early phases, the project has already catalyzed millions of dollars in adjacent public and private development.

“We’re now well into our second century, and we are committed to continuing innovation in our academic offerings as well as our institutional pledge to foster diversity and inclusiveness, and a campus climate where all students may reach their

“Working with the city and other community partners, we can feel the enthusiasm for this project and look forward to realizing the academic and cultural potential of this revitalized space,” President Lapidus said.

Learn more at fitchburgstate.edu.



WHERE WE LIVE

A guide to our local communities



AUGUST 2023

A special publication of the Sentinel and Enterprise

At Fitchburg State University

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Discover your future at our **OPEN HOUSE** **October 14 & 28 | 8:30 AM**

Explore cutting-edge programs, meet inspiring faculty, and connect with peers who share your ambitions. Don't miss this opportunity to shape your path towards success.

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LOCAL NEWS

Friday, August 4, 2023 » MORE AT [FACEBOOK.COM/SENTINELANDENTERPRISE](https://www.facebook.com/sentinelandenterprise) AND [TWITTER.COM/SENTANDENT](https://twitter.com/sentandent)

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

EDUCATION

FSU Adult Learning offers many courses this fall

Topics range from the Weimar Republic to the ukulele

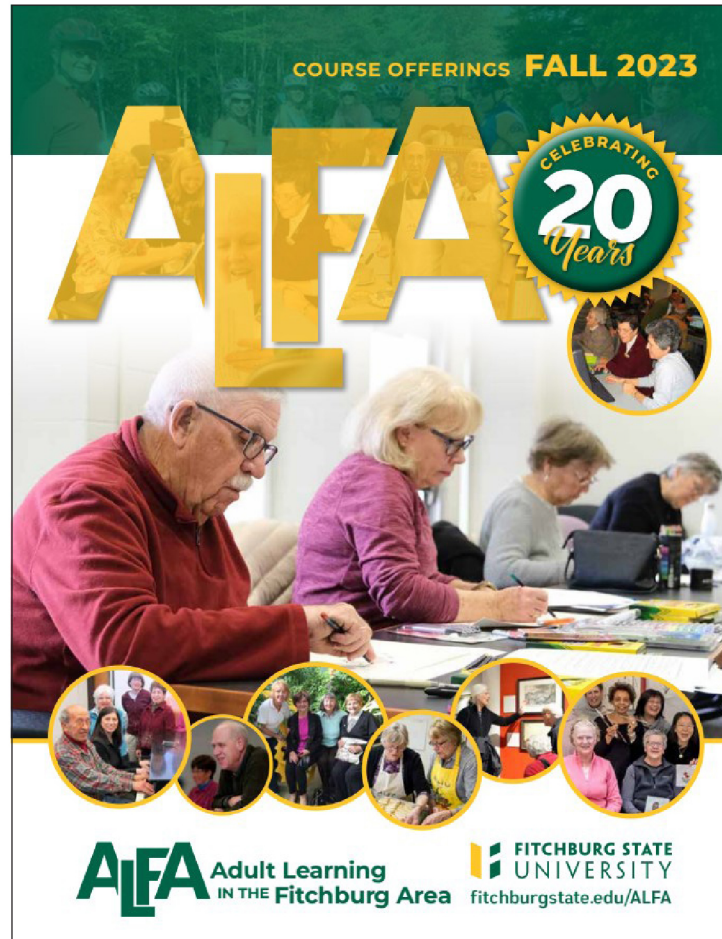
Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » Registration is now open for Fitchburg State University's Adult Learning in the Fitchburg Area (ALFA) fall courses, with offerings that will include a review of major US Supreme Court decisions from the last term as well as a course on the impact of technology on human thought and communication.

There's a book club on political and social issues and a course on how best to declutter and organize your digital photographs. Learn conversational Spanish for beginners or take your French skills to the next level. There are dozens of classes on the calendar, with the full program viewable online at fitchburgstate.edu/alfa.

ALFA is a lifelong learning institute that serves adult learners in Fitchburg and the surrounding communities. ALFA is sponsored by the School of Graduate, Online, and Continuing Education at Fitchburg State in collaboration with volunteer members of the community. It offers non-credit daytime classes, trips, special events, and a free speaker series.

ALFA students are encouraged to volunteer and participate in program leadership and development, as well as social and recreational activities. Most courses are \$45 (and free for students



COURTESY FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Registration is now open for Fitchburg State University's Adult Learning in the Fitchburg Area (ALFA) Fall courses, with offerings that will include a review of major Supreme Court decisions from the last term as well as a course on the impact of technology on human thought and communication.

over age 90). A limited number of scholarships are available.

The fall courses include an introduction to community journalism, musical offerings including ukulele and harmonica

classes, fitness classes including yoga and barre stretch and tone, and a series of walkabouts on area hiking trails.

The season will also feature

FSU » PAGE 8

FSU

FROM PAGE 3

five-part online series on important historical topics including the Reconstruction following the Civil War, the Weimar Republic in German history, and the evolution of the public library in Massachusetts.

The participant-led ALFA salon also continues this fall, with Fitchburg State faculty and other guests leading discussions on topics ranging from local abolitionist history to the U.S. labor movement and the university's plans to redevelop the Main Street the-

ater into a performing arts center.

See the complete course listing and register online at marketplace.fitchburgstate.edu/alfa.

ALFA is always on the lookout for new instructors and new subject matter to share with its students. Anyone with a specialty that they think others would be interested in should contact the program directors at alfa@fitchburgstate.edu for details about becoming an ALFA instructor.

Direct any questions to the ALFA office at 978-665-3706, or email at alfa@fitchburgstate.edu. This release was provided by Fitchburg State University.

Updated: May 29, 2023

Level up: Fitchburg State's game design program puts it near forefront of \$57B industry



PHOTO | CHRISTINE PETERSON

The team of FSU students developing a networked VR movement shooter game called Worm Punk at the university's new downtown design lab.

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By Timothy Doyle

On Thursday, May 11, on the second floor of a nearly 100-year-old, largely vacant theater building in downtown Fitchburg, a group of students wearing virtual reality headsets turned their heads and waved their arms around behind the glass walls of the school's new game design lab.

These Fitchburg State University students are testing a game called Worm Punk, a networked VR movement shooter, wherein the player flies around an arena trying to kill opponents before being killed themselves. Students and faculty say it is the first game of its kind.

The students developed the game from scratch as part of their capstone projects for their bachelor's degree in game design. Students in the game design program must complete either an internship or game studio, a 40-hour-a-week class where students develop a video game with their classmates.

“We’ve been able to do some really great stuff because it’s an environment where our careers aren’t reliant on us selling it. It’s reliant on us having a good and interesting product,” said Christian Hotte, a senior in the program who was the lead on the Worm Punk project. “That’s what I’m here for, to be able to do kind of radically experimental things.”

FSU’s program was the first game design major offered by a public university in New England and is still one of the few. It was first offered in 2014 after former executive vice president and provost Robin Bowen approached the Communications Media Department head Jeffrey Warmouth and Professor Samuel Tobin in 2012 with the idea. They got to work figuring out what would be needed for such a program, securing the facilities and personnel.



PHOTO | CHRISTINE PETERSON

Christian Hotte

The program is still going strong with graduates going on to work with large companies like North Carolina-based Epic Games, which is behind the video game phenomenon Fortnite, starting their own game studios, or taking the skills they learn to other industries like online retail, robotics, and defense. The university invested in a new game design studio in the Fitchburg theater building, which it is redeveloping, to house its entrepreneurial-style video game design capstone class.

Fitchburg State’s program is not the only game design program in Central Massachusetts. Clark University in Worcester and Worcester Polytechnic Institute both took on parts of Becker College’s celebrated program after the Worcester school dissolved in 2021.

Video games are big business. Overall total consumer spending on video games in the U.S. totaled \$56.6 billion in 2022, according to a Jan. 17 press release from the Entertainment Software Association. However, 2022 video game sales saw a 5% drop from 2021 COVID-influenced highs. In comparison, Gower Street Analytics of London said global box office sales for the movie industry was \$25.9 billion, and it projects sales of \$32 billion in 2023.

Not playing games

None of the people WBJ spoke with for this story identify as a hard-core gamer. Students who enter the Fitchburg program expecting to just play video games may transfer out of the program, as it requires an academic approach and a maker's mentality, said Tobin.

The program is nested in the Communications Media Department among majors like graphic design, film and video production, and public relations, social media, and advertising production. It is separate from the computer science department, though there is some crossover of skills.

“Game technology is another kind of storytelling, an artistic medium,” said FSU Associate Professor Jonathan Amakawa, who is the coordinator of the video game design major.

Amakawa, who has a fine arts background, sees uses for gaming technology that go beyond passing the time with Call of Duty or playing Candy Crush on the subway.

Amakawa works with augmented reality to enhance visitors' experiences at historical sites. He has worked with the U.S. National Park Service on the Abraham Lincoln Home in Illinois. He created an AR app allowing visitors to Springfield, Missouri, to see what happened during the 1908 race riot, which led to the creation of the NAACP. He created an AR app to show what the Japanese-American internment camp looked like at Heart Mountain, Wyoming.



Jonathan Amakawa, FSU associate professor in game design

In addition to bringing history to life, Panikarova said gaming technology, particularly AR and VR, are used to create training experiences for nursing students, improve online shopping experiences for retailers, and create experiences for psychological studies.

Students from the FSU program have used their knowledge to improve how robots move and have brought their skills into the defense industry.

The final level

At the capstone project's post-mortem event, a presentation of the students' final projects from the game studio class, the focus was decidedly on games. The presentation took place in a lecture hall on the main campus on May 16, before an enthusiastic crowd of students, faculty, and parents.

At the start of the semester, students pitched ideas for projects. Three games won out: Worm Punk; The Plaything, a puzzle horror game where a paper doll explores a creepy doll house; and Lobber, a manic 3D hack-and-slash game where the protagonist is pitted against a horde of skeletons and sorcerers.

The students in the studio divide into teams to work on the games. Throughout the semester, they combine their skills and learn project management as they develop a fully working game.

All of the games are available for download at itch.io, and the teams hope to get their games onto Steam, a popular video gaming platform. One of the appealing things about the program for Hotte is the teams maintain intellectual property rights to their projects.

“The big thing about going here that I really appreciate and I think every program should do is we own our games. We keep our IP,” said Hotte. “The professors are not really dictating the actual content of the products that we’re making.”

During each of the presentations, the students discussed what they had learned from the experience, which included project management, how to keep the scale of a project realistic, managing time and resources, and how to self-regulate so as not to burn out.

Because students are often so passionate about what they do, they can be subject to burnout, Hotte said, and this passion is sometimes weaponized by companies seeking to capitalize on it.

The students who presented skewed noticeably male, which Hotte said he noticed in the program. There are no women professors in game design, something he hopes the school will remedy as it hires a new professor.

The gaming industry does have a gender imbalance according to data from job site Zippia, with 86.7% of game designers being male. The data does not account for nonbinary designers.

Video game designer: job statistics nationally

Average annual salary \$95,185
Average age 43.8

Demographics

Male 87%
 Female 13%

White 68%
 Asian 12%
 Hispanic or Latino 9%
 Black 6%
 Unknown 5%
 American Indian & Alaska Native 1%

Source: Zippia

CHART | MITCHELL HAYES

Video game designer: job statistics nationally

Students who graduate from the program and enter the gaming industry can expect to find themselves in a highly-competitive environment, possibly subject to long hours and low entry-level pay, said Hotte.

Layoffs can be part of the industry as large projects end and the personnel who worked on a game may be cut loose to look for another project at another company. Even successful game designers find themselves moving from company to company, said Amakawa.

The cyclical nature of hiring has been tempered by the rise of live-service games, like Fortnite, said Denzel Witherspoon, who graduated from Fitchburg State in 2019 and now works for Epic Games. Live-service games constantly add new levels or features to an existing game rather than releasing entirely new retail products.

Witherspoon has helped connect FSU graduates with Epic since joining the company. Students specifically from the Fitchburg State gaming program have an advantage as they get access to a lot of aspects of game design and not funneled into a specialty, he said.

“Students need to take advantage of the software that they have access to while in school,” said Witherspoon. And after school, he advises students to not be discouraged if they don’t land a job immediately.

“Keep learning, keep busy,” he said.

In what is ostensibly his spare time, Witherspoon runs a game studio called Dannel Cake, which he started in 2017. He finished his first game, *Obsolete Souls*, in 2018.



PHOTO | COURTESY OF DENZEL WITHERSPOON

FSU grad Denzel Witherspoon works for Epic Games and founded a game design studio Dannel Cake.

Making games is very much a passion for the graduates. He has a job lined up in technology manufacturing after graduation, but he intends to continue building games.

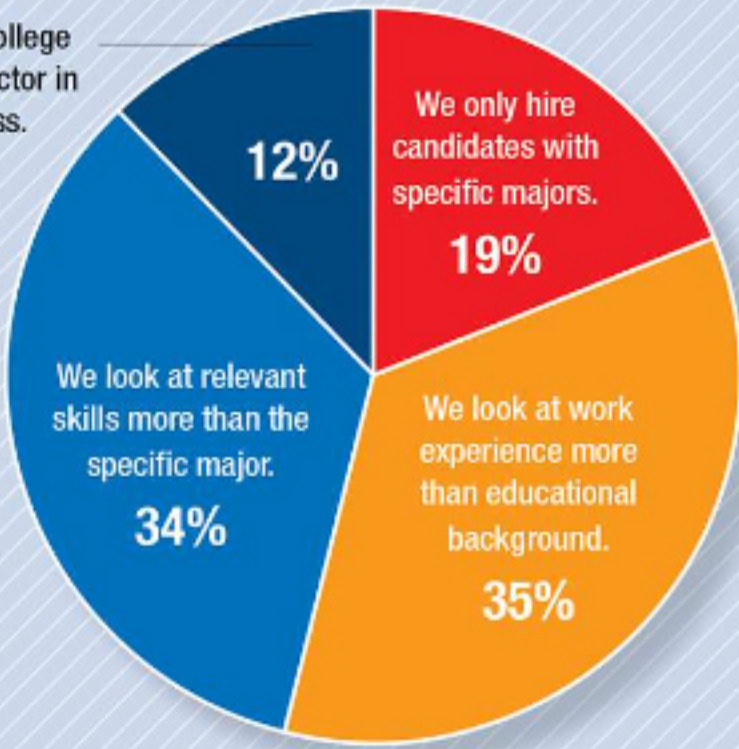
FLASH POLL

College major is only part of the factor in the hiring process

Fitchburg State University offers a bachelor's degree in game design, which meshes numerous areas of study including animation, computer programming, and creative writing into one major. When polled online, nearly 70% of WBJ readers say a job candidate's specific major in college is only part of the equation in the hiring process.

How much does a job candidate's college major impact your hiring decisions?

An applicant's college major is not a factor in our hiring process.



COMMENTS:

"We look at the major and the skills and experience. How can this be just an either/or situation?"

CHART | MITCHELL HAYES

Fitchburg State signs transfer agreement with German sister-city university



PHOTO | COURTESY OF FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

From left: Professor Paul Weizer, chairman of the Economics, History and Political Science Department; President Richard S. Lapidus; and Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Patricia Marshall

By Timothy Doyle

Students at Fitchburg State University will soon be able to complete a bachelor of arts in international business at Rhein-Waal University of Applied Sciences in Kleve, Germany.

Under the new agreement, students at Rhein-Waal University will also be able to complete a bachelor of science in economics with a concentration in international business and economics at Fitchburg State, according to a Monday press release from FSU.

“Fitchburg State has enjoyed a long and mutually beneficial relationship with Rhein-Waal University of Applied Sciences, in which our students and faculty have taken part in meaningful interactions, both in-person and in virtual space,” Fitchburg State President Richard Lapidus said in the press release. “This new agreement outlines clear pathways for students from both countries to pursue powerful academic credentials, and creates tremendous opportunities for our future graduates.

The degree program is not the first collaboration between the universities. This past spring students traveled to Kleve for The Heart of Europe, a course on major themes in contemporary European history, politics and economics. The class will next be offered in Spring 2025.

“The cities of Fitchburg and Kleve have been sister cities for more than 30 years and thus maintain friendly relations between the Lower Rhine and Massachusetts,” said Rhein-Waal University President Oliver Locker-Grütjen in the press release. “I am pleased that we are now taking a step further in the cooperation between the two educational institutions to deepen ties and exchanges.”

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Tuesday, July 4, 2023

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HIGHER LEARNING

FSU, German counterpart expand partnership

Pact grows educational cooperation

By **Kyle Lockwood**

Correspondent

FITCHBURG » Three decades of partnership has taken a new step for the city and Kleve, Germany.

Fitchburg State University has a longstanding partnership with Rhein-Waal University of Applied Sciences; both institutions have signed on a new agreement in an effort to expand their relationship.

The agreement spells out clear transfer opportunities between the institutions, enabling students from both countries to complete baccalaureate degrees. Under terms of the pact, German students may complete Fitchburg State's bachelor of science in economics with a concentration in international business and economics, while American students may complete a bachelor of arts in international business administration through Rhein-Waal University of Applied Sciences (HSRW).

"Fitchburg State has enjoyed a long and mutually beneficial re-

FSU » PAGE 8

FSU

FROM PAGE 1

lationship with Rhein-Waal University of Applied Sciences, in which our students and faculty have taken part in meaningful interactions, both in-person and in virtual space," Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus said in a press release. "This new agreement outlines clear pathways for students from both countries to pursue powerful academic credentials, and creates tremendous opportunities for our future graduates."

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PHOTO COURTESY FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Officials from Fitchburg State University and Rhein-Waal University of Applied Sciences in Kleve, Germany, recently held a virtual signing ceremony to formalize a new transfer agreement between the institutions. At FSU, signers included Professor Paul Weizer, chairman of the Economics, History and Political Science Department; President Richard S. Lapidus; and Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Patricia Marshall.

Sentinel & Enterprise

Tuesday, August 22, 2023

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FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Artist's drawings reflect war in Ukraine

Hammond Hall Art Gallery exhibit opens Sept. 5

Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » Powerful drawings inspired by the war in Ukraine are on display this fall at Fitchburg State University's Hammond Hall Art Gallery in artist Hanna Melnyczuk's exhibit "Don't Close Your Eyes."

Melnyczuk began creating these drawings upon Russia's invasion of Ukraine in an attempt to show her personal attempts to process what is happening to the country her parents left in 1944. Influenced by her work on children's books, the images in this collection show her struggle to understand the unfathomable acts of war that fill her mind.

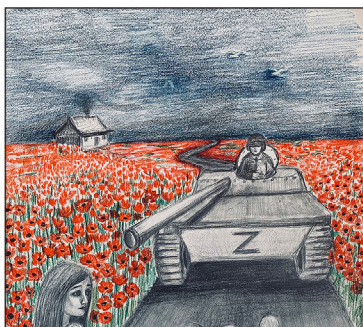
"Don't Close Your Eyes: Reactions to the War in Ukraine" will be on display in the Hammond Hall Art Gallery from Tuesday, Sept. 5 through Sunday, Oct. 15. There will be a reception with the artist at 3:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 21 at the gallery, located in Hammond Hall at 160 Pearl St. Admission is free and open to the public.

Learn more about Fitchburg State's cultural offerings at fitchburgstate.edu/centerstage.

About The Exhibit

When the Ukrainian people plead, "Close the sky!" her work obliges by sewing it shut with needle and thread, as imagination succeeds where reality fails. Collapsing buildings and shattered bricks reveal the bodies beneath

EXHIBIT » PAGE 8



COURTESY FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

"She Saw Only Red" by artist Hanna Melnyczuk.

Exhibit

FROM PAGE 1

the rubble. Here, children hope and families grieve in a landscape which at times remains preternaturally serene. These drawings bring to the fore the death and horror of war through the filter of time and distance, expressing the emotions of someone viewing events from afar, depicting what can only be seen in the mind's eye.

About the Artist

Hanna Melnyczuk received an MFA from Mass College of Art. Her work has appeared at Art Space in Maynard, UMass Lowell Mahoney Gallery, The Gallery at the Piano Factory, the Danforth Museum, Tufts Gallery, Brush Gallery, Fountain Street Gallery, New Art Center, and more. She has curated two art exhibits: Agni Magazine of Emerging Artists (published by Agni Press as Agni 37: Standing on the Verge: Emerging Poets & Artists alongside poetry curated by Joseph Lease and Thomas Sayers Ellis); the other, a traveling exhibit of Ukrainian artists' works, "Don't Close Your Eyes," responding to the current war. Hanna teaches drawing and 2D design at UMass Lowell.

COURTESY FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

"Close the Sky" by artist Hanna Melnyczuk.

