



Fitchburg State University

Board of Trustees

Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees Meeting

Published on April 10, 2025 at 4:22 PM EDT

Date and Time

Thursday April 17, 2025 at 1:00 PM EDT

Location

Hammond Hall, Main Lounge

This meeting will be live streamed and recorded.

Notice of a meeting of the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees on Thursday, April 17, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.

The meeting will take place in the Main Lounge, Hammond Hall, Fitchburg, MA 01420

Public Live Stream:

<https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/live>

Agenda

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
I. Opening Items			1:00 PM
Opening Items			

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
A. Record Attendance and Guests		Michael Fiorentino, Jr.	1 m
B. Call the Meeting to Order		Michael Fiorentino, Jr.	
C. Public Comment			5 m
II. Board Chair's Report			1:06 PM
A. Approval of Minutes, February 18, 2025 VOTE (15.2024-2025)	Approve Minutes	Michael Fiorentino, Jr.	2 m
B. Approval of Minutes, March 28, 2025 VOTE (16.2024-2025)	Approve Minutes	Michael Fiorentino, Jr.	2 m
III. President's Report			1:10 PM
A. From the President	FYI	President Donna Hodge	15 m
B. Provost and EVP Update	Discuss	Patricia Marshall	10 m
C. Enrollment Management Update	Discuss	Richard Toomey	10 m
D. Housing and Contract Updates	Discuss	Matt Lechter	10 m
IV. Student Trustee Report			1:55 PM
Presented by Matthew Gill			
A. Student Trustee Report	FYI	Matthew Gill	5 m
V. Academic Affairs Committee Update			2:00 PM
A. Update from Jennifer Flanagan, Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee	FYI	Jennifer Flanagan	5 m
VI. Personnel Committee Update			2:05 PM

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
A. Update from Lynn Barrieau, Chair of the Personnel Committee	FYI	Lynn Barrieau	10 m
VII. Student Life Committee Update			2:15 PM
A. Update from Sheila King-Goodwin, Chair of the Student Life Committee	FYI	Sheila King-Goodwin	10 m
VIII. Budget Report/Updates			2:25 PM
A. Presented by Dr. Hodge/Heidi Swift	Discuss	President Hodge/Heidi Swift	30 m
IX. Closing Items			2:55 PM
A. Adjourn Meeting Chair Fiorentino	Vote		5 m

Coversheet

Approval of Minutes, February 18, 2025 VOTE (15.2024-2025)

Section: II. Board Chair's Report
Item: A. Approval of Minutes, February 18, 2025 VOTE (15.2024-2025)
Purpose: Approve Minutes
Submitted by:
Related Material:
Minutes for Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees on February 18, 2025
VOTE Minutes February 18 2025.pdf

APPROVED



Fitchburg State University

Minutes

Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday February 18, 2025 at 1:00 PM

Location

Hammond Hall, Main Lounge. The meeting will also be livestreamed.

Notice of a meeting of the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees on Tuesday, February 18, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.

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Trustees Present

C. Stimpson, D. Phillips (remote), D. Tiernan, E. Gregoire, J. Flanagan, K. Spinelli, L. Barrieau, M. Fiorentino, Jr., M. Gill

Trustees Absent

M. Morris, S. King-Goodwin

Guests Present

K. Lundgren

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

M. Fiorentino, Jr. called a meeting of the board of trustees of Fitchburg State University to order on Tuesday Feb 18, 2025 at 1:09 PM.

C. Public Comment

There are no public Comments

II. Board Chair's Report

A. Approval of Minutes, December 12, 2024 VOTE (10.2024-2025)

C. Stimpson made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees on 12-12-24.

J. Flanagan seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

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

III. President's Report

A. From the President

President's Report (President Hodge):

- President Hodge announced that her written report would stand as submitted.
- She prioritized three presentations:
 - Academic Affairs Report (Dr. Patricia Marshall)
 - Enrollment Report (Rich Toomey)
 - Housing, Contracts and Real Estate Report (Matt Lechter)

B. Provost and EVP Update

Academic Affairs Report (Dr. Patricia Marshall):

• Academic Portfolio Analysis:

- A contract was signed with Eduventures to conduct an academic portfolio analysis.
- Eduventures was selected for its clear assessment methodology and detailed metrics.
- The analysis will use data from various sources (IPEDS, BLS, Lightcast) to inform strategic planning.
- Both external (market demand, competition) and internal metrics (enrollment, retention) will be analyzed.
- Eduventures will provide a summary document and a program strengths assessment scorecard.
- The goal is to strengthen existing programs, not eliminate them.
- The analysis aligns with the 2021-2022 academic plan and the 2020-2025 strategic plan, focusing on differentiation and program resonance.
- The first scoping call with Eduventures is scheduled for February 21st.
- Results are expected in fall 2025.

• New Finance Major:

- A new cross-disciplinary finance major is being developed between economics and business administration.
- An EAB feasibility study indicated strong student demand and career opportunities.
- The program will be submitted to governance for consideration this spring.
- If approved, a letter of intent will be submitted to the Board of Higher Education (BHE).
- The BHE will determine if the program receives fast-track or standard approval.
- The goal is to launch the program in fall 2026.
- One new faculty member will be required.
- Discussion of the market demand for finance graduates.
- Discussion of the ability to add a minor in finance.

• Cyber Security Concentration:

- The computer science department will add a cyber security concentration to the MS in computer science program in fall 2025.
- This concentration does not require BHE approval.
- It will be a four-course concentration available online and face-to-face.
- No additional costs are anticipated beyond course development expenses.

• Personnel Updates:

- A new fiscal coordinator was hired in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.
- The search for a Dean of Business and Technology closed with 38 applicants.
- Campus visits for dean candidates are expected in March and April.

- Provost Marshall thanked Dean Jannette McMenemy for her service as dean of two schools.
- President Hodge thanked Provost Marshall and Dean McMenemy for their work.

• **Q&A and Discussion:**

- Clarification on the new finance major curriculum.
- Discussion about the resources needed for the new finance major.
- Discussion about the timeline for the dean of business and technology search.
- Discussion regarding the applicant pool for the dean of business and technology position.

C. Enrollment Management Update

Enrollment Management Report (Rich Toomey):

• **Forecasting and Growth:**

- The focus is on forecasting and projecting future enrollment, moving beyond post-COVID recovery.
- The goal is to set a positive and ambitious path for growth, focusing on both recruitment and retention.
- Enrollment management requires extensive campus partnerships and collaboration.
- New initiatives include:
 - Direct admission programs with targeted regional schools.
 - Enhanced financial aid programs (Falcon Promise, Fitchburg Promise, sibling grants).
 - Targeted outreach to adult learners, veteran students, and niche populations.

• **Undergraduate Day Enrollment Goals:**

- A 2% enrollment increase is targeted for fall 2025 (45 additional students).
- An additional 2% increase is targeted for fall 2026.
- A 5% growth in first-time, full-time (FTFT) freshmen is targeted for fall 2025.
- Transfer student population will be stabilized due to community college initiatives.
- The university has met budgeted enrollment targets, but stretch goals are now being set.

• **President Hodge's Comments:**

- Emphasized the shift from trend data to aspirational goals.
- Highlighted the need to invest in academics.
- Acknowledged the importance of adult learners and upskilling students.
- Discussed the impact of free community college programs and the need to engage with those students early.
- Discussed creative ways to partner with community colleges, such as offering on-campus housing.

- Discussed the need to message the value of a full college experience.
- Discussed the importance of direct admission programs.
- Discussed the need to have a single enrollment plan for all of campus.
- Discussed the need to pull retention efforts into enrollment management.

Q&A and Discussion:

• Community College Partnerships:

- Discussion on engaging with community college students and offering transfer pathways.
- Discussion of creative partnerships with community colleges.

• SGOCE and Graduate Programs:

- Discussion on goals and expectations for continuing education and graduate programs.
- Discussion on the need for a single enrollment plan for all of campus.

• Enrollment Landscape:

- Discussion on the challenges and opportunities in the enrollment landscape over the next five years.
- Discussion on the need for managed growth and collaboration with state and federal partners.

• Market Share:

- Discussion on whether the growth potential is from reclaiming market share or expanding into new markets.
- Discussion on the importance of serving the local region and rebuilding partnerships.
- Discussion on the growth potential in adult learners and military/veteran students.
- Discussion on the need to invest in programs and support systems that attract those student populations.

• Retention:

- Discussion on the increased effort needed to retain students in today's environment.
- Discussion on the impact of food and housing insecurity on student retention.

• Marketing:

- Discussion on the shift towards a marketing focus in enrollment management.

• General Comments:

- Jen Flanagan thanked Provost Marshall and the campus for being nimble enough to reach out to people where they are.
- President Hodge and Rich Toomey discussed the importance of collaborative efforts and setting ambitious goals.
- Discussion on the need to evaluate and improve the supports and resources available to students.

- Discussion on the need to communicate the value of Fitchburg State University.

D. Housing, Contracts and Real Estate

Housing, Contract and Real Estate Report (Matt Lechter)

- Lechter is serving as Special Assistant to the President for special projects.
- The focus is on clarifying housing possibilities, addressing misinformation, and preparing for discussions on real estate holdings.
- **Herlihy Hall Update:**
 - 64 applications were received for 13 beds.
 - The announcement and tour were successful, with positive feedback.
 - The second side of the first floor opened in January, with ongoing work.
 - Eight commuter students were brought onto campus, some living in Herlihy Hall, others in other residence halls.
 - Strategic planning for student needs and revenue generation is ongoing.
- **Spring Occupancy:**
 - Spring occupancy is at 927 students, matching last spring's numbers, despite starting with 31 fewer students in the fall.
 - This indicates a significant retention boost.
 - Efforts continue to attract commuter students to on-campus living.
- **Graduate Student Housing:**
 - Graduate student occupancy at North Street increased from 4 to 9 students.
 - These students do not count towards state occupancy reports.
 - International student website now advertises graduate student housing.
- **Year-Round Housing:**
 - Year-round housing is available, with over 50 students living on campus last summer.
 - Apartment-style housing with kitchens is needed for year-round residents.
- **Financial Considerations:**
 - Fitchburg State has the lowest housing costs within the MSCBA portfolio.
 - Rising insurance costs, utilities, personnel, and deferred maintenance require balancing revenue generation with affordability.
- **Property Portfolio:**
 - The university owns a variety of properties, including residential, commercial, and vacant buildings.
 - A comprehensive review of the portfolio is underway.
 - Heide Messing from CPM is providing valuable assistance in understanding the properties.
- **MSCBA Funding:**
 - \$700K to \$1 million in MSCBA funding has been secured for townhouse renovations, boiler and lighting updates, and heating systems.
 - This is the first time in 5-6 years that such projects have been funded.
- **Mount Wachusett Partnership:**

- Discussions are ongoing to create a housing program for Mount Wachusett students.
- This could serve as a recruitment tool for Fitchburg State.

• **International Student Housing:**

- Efforts are being made to increase international student housing opportunities.

• **24/7 Support:**

- Housing requires 24/7 support, including maintenance and resident director staff.

• **Future Executive Session:**

- A future executive session is planned to discuss property details in greater detail.

President Hodge's Comments:

- Emphasized the importance of asking for MSCBA funding.
- Highlighted the collaborative approach with MSCBA, DCAMM, finance, housing, and capital planning and maintenance.
- Discussed the challenges of managing the university's property portfolio.
- Emphasized the importance of employee engagement and feeling part of solutions.
- Reiterated the university's commitment to not purchasing additional property without board approval.
- Emphasized the need to review existing properties and their potential uses.

Q&A and Discussion:

• **MSCBA and DCAMM Requirements:**

- Discussion on the complexities of state regulations and reporting.
- Discussion on the need for creative solutions and collaboration with state agencies.

• **Family Housing:**

- Discussion on the possibility of offering family housing and the associated challenges.

• **Property Inventory and Condition:**

- Discussion on the need for a complete inventory of properties and their conditions.
- Discussion on the current occupancy rates and the impact of various factors.

• **Summer Housing and Revenue Generation:**

- Discussion on the need to streamline processes for summer housing, camps, and clinics.
- Discussion on the need to move towards a "yes" mentality.

• **Property Assessment and Management Plan:**

- Discussion on the need for a full assessment of properties and a management plan.

IV. Student Trustee Report

A. Student Trustee Report

• Elevating the Student Trustee Role:

- Matt announced his efforts to elevate the role of the student trustee by establishing connections with various campus offices and departments.
- He collaborated with Michael Kennedy, Director of the Office of Student Development, to identify key offices for outreach.
- Initial meetings were conducted with Veteran Affairs, International Education, and the School of Graduate, Online, and Continuing Education (SGOCE).
- The primary goal was to understand how the student trustee and the Student Government Association (SGA) could support these offices and their student populations.

• Veteran Affairs:

- Met with the Fitchburg State University Chief of Police, who oversees Veteran Affairs.
- Discussed the university's efforts to hire a Director of Veteran Affairs to strengthen support for the approximately 139 veteran students.
- Announced an alumni and student veterans' event on March 29, 2025, featuring social activities and a guest speaker.
- Explored the possibility of creating an official veterans club or organization on campus.

• International Education:

- Met with Nelly Wadsworth, Director of International Education.
- Discussed the international student experience, focusing on opportunities for improvement.
- Identified challenges in accessibility for international graduate students and planned to collaborate on solutions.
- Collaborating with Michael Kennedy and the Office of Student Development to enhance programming for international students.

• School of Graduate, Online, and Continuing Education (SGOCE):

- Met with Peter August, Assistant Dean of Enrollment from SGOCE.
- Discussed the need to provide on-campus experiences for online and continuing education students who are locally based.
- Explored ideas to address challenges and create a better experience for all SGOCE students.

• Undergraduate Day Student Experience:

- Highlighted successful spring semester events, including "Rock the Lounge" and a "Bingo Blowout."

- Reported high usage of the Commuter Lounge, with consistent swipe numbers.

- September: 448 swipes
- October: 474 swipes
- November: 419 swipes
- December: 297 swipes

• **Student Government Association (SGA) Updates:**

- Held a spring retreat on January 19, 2025, focusing on long-term change, advocacy, leadership, and goal setting.
- Featured guest speaker Adam Keyes, a former Fitchburg State SGA e-board member.
- Announced an SGA reunion on March 1st from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

President Hodge's Comments:

- Commended Matt and the SGA for their efforts to address the diverse needs of the student population.
- Highlighted the importance of creating inclusive experiences for all students.
- Noted the positive impact of the employee incentive program on graduate student inclusion in the dining hall.
- Acknowledged the approval of the first graduate student organization by the SGA.
- Thanked Matt and the SGA leadership for their dedication.
- Thanked Michael Burns, SGA president, for his work.

V. Athletics Update

A. Athletics Update

Athletics Update

- Matt Burke, Executive Director of Athletics and Recreation, presented a high-level overview of the athletics program.
- He discussed student-athlete accomplishments and future growth opportunities.
- He oversees 17 varsity athletic programs and the recreational sports program.

• **Student-Athlete Snapshots:**

- Highlighted the dedication and passion of student-athletes, showcasing their competitive spirit.
- Emphasized the "17 sports, one team" philosophy, promoting unity and support across all programs.
- Stressed the importance of university-wide support for successful athletic programs.

Athletics Mission and NCAA Division III:

- **Mission Statement:**

- Extends education beyond the classroom, fostering valuable life skills.
- Promotes an inclusive environment for student-athletes to excel.

- **NCAA Division III Overview:**

- Integrates student-athletes into the overall college experience, balancing academics and athletics.
- Focuses on developing well-rounded individuals for professional success beyond sports.
- Emphasized that Fitchburg State does not offer athletic scholarships.
- Encourages student-athletes to participate in clubs, organizations, and leadership roles.

- **Division III Facts and Figures:**

- 429 member institutions, the largest NCAA division.
- 80% private, 20% public institutions.
- Average of 18 athletic programs per institution.

MASCAC Conference:

- Highlighted the MASCAC as the oldest Division III men's and women's playing conference.
- Emphasized the conference's regional focus, minimizing travel time for student-athletes.
- Noted the strong sense of community and shared experiences among MASCAC institutions.

Student-Athlete Demographics:

- Approximately 360 student-athletes (223 male, 137 female).
- High number of student-athletes participate in multiple sports.
- 194 student-athletes reside on campus.
- Student-athletes represent 28 states and several international countries.
- Highlighted the diversity of student-athlete majors, with Business Administration and Exercise and Sports Science being the most popular.
- Noted the trend of multiple siblings participating in Fitchburg State athletics.

Coaching and Recruitment:

- Emphasized the crucial role of coaches in recruiting and retaining student-athletes.
- Highlighted the extensive recruitment process, including showcases, tournaments, and campus tours.
- Reported that 57% of first-year student-athletes chose Fitchburg State primarily for the opportunity to participate in athletics.
- Highlighted Kayla Quinn, MASCAC Field Hockey Coach of the Year.

Academic Performance and Retention:

- Student-athletes maintain a GPA above 3.0.
- Student-athlete retention rate is slightly higher than the general student population.
- Reported that senior student-athletes identify leadership, time management, communication, teamwork, and accountability as key skills developed through athletics.

Athletic Successes:

- Highlighted team and individual accomplishments from the past year, including:
 - Field hockey: MASCAC regular season champions.
 - Men's and women's soccer: Conference semi-finalists.
 - Individual All-American honors.
 - Discussed ongoing seasons for ice hockey and basketball, and preparations for spring sports.

Future Opportunities and Growth:

- Emphasized the role of athletics in supporting institutional enrollment goals.
- Identified opportunities to grow enrollment within existing athletic programs.
- Highlighted the need to expand female athletic opportunities to ensure Title IX compliance.
- Proposed exploring the creation of a varsity women's ice hockey program due to:
 - Existing facility (Wallace Civic Center).
 - Growing popularity of women's ice hockey.
 - MASCAC sponsorship of ice hockey.
 - Contribution to gender equity.
 - Potential to balance costs with the men's ice hockey program.

Q&A and Discussion:

- **Student-Athlete Support:**
 - Discussed the need to enhance academic support for student-athletes, particularly first-year students.
 - Highlighted the importance of communication and collaboration with other campus departments, such as dining services.
 - Discussed the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) as a valuable forum for student-athlete feedback.
- **Balancing Academics and Athletics:**
 - Discussed results of the satisfaction survey.
 - Explained that the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and conversations with student athletes are the primary ways that the athletic department receives feedback.

VI. Marketing Update

A.

Marketing Update

Marketing Update (Rich Toomey)

- Rich Toomey, Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management, presented an overview of the Marketing and Integrated Communications team's work.
- He emphasized the team's small size and nimbleness, highlighting their ability to produce high-quality content with limited resources.
- He encouraged attendees to explore the numerous links, videos, and resources provided in the presentation materials.
- He highlighted the "One-Minute Majors" video series and other digital content available on the university's website and social media platforms.

Team Overview:

- The Marketing and Integrated Communications team is responsible for social media, website content, visual elements (videography and photography), and overall university marketing.
- Toomey noted the significant difference between Fitchburg State's marketing budget and the industry standard of 10% of the operating budget.
- He emphasized the team's role in educating the campus community about brand guidelines and ensuring consistent messaging.
- He reiterated that everyone associated with Fitchburg State is a brand ambassador.

Social Media:

- The team manages 13 social media platforms, developing content and engaging with various audiences.
- Social media ambassadors and content creators, consisting of over 30 students, contribute to the team's efforts.
- The team collaborates with academic and administrative units through a social media advisory group.
- Data-driven decision-making is employed, with significant reach and engagement metrics reported.
- Various video content is produced for different platforms, including welcome videos, tour guides, and alumni outreach.

Major Advertising Campaigns (Kelly Norris):

- The team works with Mass Media for Google Ads (search, display, marketing) and Davis Advertising for broader campaigns.
- Google Ads are used to promote priority programs, open houses, and other initiatives.
- Audience matching campaigns, using lookalike audiences, have shown high click-through rates.

- Davis Advertising campaigns include connected TV, display ads, social media (Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook), Spotify, and Spanish radio.
- Geo-fencing is used to target specific high schools for recruitment purposes.
- Additional marketing efforts include journal advertisements, community newspapers, and banner ads.

Collateral Creation and Graphic Design:

- The team utilizes both external vendors and in-house graphic designers for collateral creation.
- In-house designers handle a high volume of projects, including publications, posters, and promotional materials.
- The team leverages student talent for real-time content creation.

Website Management:

- The team partners with Technology for website management, focusing on content development and user experience.
- The website receives over 1.3 million hits annually, with a 24-hour turnaround time for updates.
- The team prioritizes accessibility, consistently maintaining a high accessibility score.
- The team manages the Burg Blog, SmugMug, One-Minute Majors video series, and the online magazine.

Future Initiatives:

- The team is exploring new marketing strategies, including digital displays at community colleges and targeted international advertising.
- The team emphasizes the use of QR codes and digital content over traditional collateral.
- The "It's About You" campaign is being integrated into various marketing efforts.
- The team is partnering with Wachusett Mountain for promotional activities.
- The team plans to expand its resources and prioritize marketing efforts.
- The team is focused on representing brand integrity and ensuring consistent messaging.
- The team is adapting to the evolving landscape of digital and social media marketing.

Q&A and Discussion:

- **CASE Conference:**
 - President Hodge highlighted the importance of the upcoming CASE conference for professional development and industry best practices.
 - The conference will provide opportunities for team members to collaborate and learn from other institutions.

- **Budgetary Constraints:**

- President Hodge acknowledged the team's limited budget and the need for increased investment in marketing.
- She noted the successful marketing strategies employed by SGOCE and the need to replicate them for undergraduate programs.

- **Viral Video:** President Hodge highlighted a viral video created by the women's lacrosse team, showcasing the power of student-led social media. She commended the team, coach, and student-athletes for their authentic and positive representation of Fitchburg State.

VII. Academic Affairs Committee Update

A. Update from Jennifer Flanagan, Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee

Due to a cancellation, there was no Academic Affairs Committee Meeting.

Student Life Committee Update (Carolyn Crowley Stimpson):

- **Chartwells:**

- Matt Lechter worked with Chartwells' to extend dining hall hours for student-athletes.
- Chartwells is introducing Latin-inspired dinners and an on-demand pancake machine.
- Plans to issue an RFP for dining services in fall 2025, with a decision in 2026.

- **Herlihy Hall Renovations:**

- Updates on Herlihy Hall renovations were provided

- **Dean of Students Report:**

- Tim St. John, Dean of Students, highlighted the increased complexity of serving student needs.
- The revamped CARE program saw a 92% increase in utilization compared to the previous fall.
- Top student concerns include:
 - Academics
 - Medical issues
 - Mental health
 - Basic needs (food and housing)
 - Suicidal ideation
 - Grief and loss (anecdotal evidence)
- The Falcon Bazaar pantry experienced a 265% increase in visits.
- Student involvement is on the rise, with a 70% increase in student clubs and seven new clubs.
- Leadership development is a key focus this spring, with workshops on effective communication and skill-building for future careers.

- The Falcon Bazaar is exploring ways to provide prepared foods for student-athletes who return late at night.

VIII. Finance Committee Update

A. Update from Karen Spinelli, Chair of the Finance Committee

Finance Committee Update (Karen Spinelli):

• Fiscal Year 2025 and 2026 Budgets:

- The finance committee met to discuss the fiscal year 2025 budget and a preview of the fiscal year 2026 budget.
- President Hodge introduced Heidi Swift, Executive in Charge of Finance, and emphasized the importance of financial planning, including cash flow and investments.
- Heidi Swift shared observations about the university's financial status and the need for open communication.
- Tuition revenue was reported as stable.
- The university is closely monitoring the impact of federal executive orders on state aid.
- A fifth board meeting was proposed for May 12th to confirm the fiscal year 2026 budget.
- Enrollment numbers were discussed, with a goal to increase enrollment by 2% for fall 2025.
- The importance of online programs was emphasized.
- President Hodge stressed the need for strategic growth in maximizing assets and announced the elimination of extraordinary budget requests.
- The committee reviewed the budget document and discussed grant funding, which is currently stable.
- A collaboration between student accounts and academic affairs to improve billing practices and student retention was noted.
- Further details were said to be provided in Heidi Swifts report to the full board.

IX. Budget Report/Updates

A. Presented by Dr. Hodge/Heidi Swift

- President Hodge reported that the budget updates were proceeding as expected, indicating stability.
- The budget is included in the presentation packet, and the university will continue to reconcile approved budgets with actual expenditures.
- The goal for fiscal year 2026 is to work with individual units to develop accurate budgets based on actual expenses and operational needs, rather than historical allocations.

- Extraordinary budget requests will be eliminated, with operational needs addressed through cabinet-level leadership.
- Heidi Swift will work closely with cabinet-level leadership to develop the fiscal year 2026 budget plan.
- Campus was informed of a request to plan for a level-funded budget, meaning funding aligned with actual expenses.
- The university is aiming to operate agilely and intentionally, avoiding deficits.
- The “dear colleague” letter to university presidents regarding executive orders was acknowledged, and the university is working with state partners to navigate potential impacts.
- The university's financial standing is currently stable, with funds being drawn down as expected.

Q&A and Discussion:

• Personnel Expenditures:

- Discussion on managing personnel expenditures, vacancies, and attrition.
- President Hodge emphasized intentional backfilling, working with cabinet-level leadership and the finance team.
- Job descriptions are being reviewed and updated, and entry-level hiring is considered where appropriate.
- New roles require cabinet-level discussion and approval.
- Strategic investments in areas like admissions and academic programs were highlighted.
- The feedback from the financial sustainability task force was taken into account.
- The importance of collaborative and transparent personnel decisions was emphasized.

• Operational Needs:

- Discussion on identifying core operational needs, anticipated needs, and growth opportunities.
- The university is aiming to empower individuals and realign resources to maximize their potential.
- The provosts process for determining operational needs was highlighted as a good model.
- Fiscal year 2026 planning is a step toward achieving this goal by fiscal year 2027.
- The university is being transparent about its current financial situation and making careful adjustments.
- Trustees will be engaged in a thorough review of the FY2026 budget in the near future.

B. FY26 Budget Planning Process

X. 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 4:09 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
M. Fiorentino, Jr.

**Fitchburg State University
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

TO: Board of Trustees Meeting	DATE: April 17, 2025
FROM: The President	REQUEST NUMBER: 15-2024-2025
SUBJECT: February 18, 2025 meeting minutes	

It is requested that the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees vote to approve the minutes from the February 18, 2025 meeting.

Coversheet

Approval of Minutes, March 28, 2025 VOTE (16.2024-2025)

Section:	II. Board Chair's Report
Item:	B. Approval of Minutes, March 28, 2025 VOTE (16.2024-2025)
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Submitted by:	
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APPROVED



Fitchburg State University

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time

Friday March 28, 2025 at 10:00 AM

Location

This meeting is virtual and will be live streamed

Notice of a meeting of the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees on Friday, March 28, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

The meeting will be virtual and live streamed

Public Live Stream:

<https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/live>

Trustees Present

D. Phillips (remote), E. Gregoire (remote), J. Flanagan (remote), L. Barrieau, M. Fiorentino, Jr., M. Gill (remote), M. Morris (remote), S. King-Goodwin (remote)

Trustees Absent

C. Stimpson, D. Tiernan, K. Spinelli

Ex Officio Members Present

D. Hodge

Non Voting Members Present

D. Hodge

Guests Present

K. Lundgren, M. Bruun

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

M. Fiorentino, Jr. called a meeting of the board of trustees of Fitchburg State University to order on Friday Mar 28, 2025 at 10:00 AM.

II. Tenure Approval

A. Approval of Tenure

D. Phillips made a motion to Approve the President's recommendation for Tenure and Promotion.

J. Flanagan seconded the motion.

Chairman Fiorentino reviewed the tenure process.

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

Roll Call

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

J. Flanagan made a motion to Approve the President's recommendation for Tenure only.

D. Phillips seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

S. King-Goodwin	Aye
L. Barrieau	Aye
K. Spinelli	Absent

Roll Call

M. Morris	Aye
J. Flanagan	Aye
M. Gill	Aye
C. Stimpson	Absent
M. Fiorentino, Jr.	Aye
D. Phillips	Aye
E. Gregoire	Aye
D. Tiernan	Absent

III. 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 10:05 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
M. Fiorentino, Jr.

**Fitchburg State University
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

TO: Board of Trustees Meeting	DATE: April 17, 2025
FROM: The President	REQUEST NUMBER: 16-2024-2025
SUBJECT: March 28, 2025 meeting minutes	

It is requested that the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees vote to approve the minutes from the March 28, 2025 meeting.

Coversheet

From the President

Section:	III. President's Report
Item:	A. From the President
Purpose:	FYI
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	President's Report to the Board of Trustees_ April 2025.pdf

President's Report to the Board of Trustees

Dr. Donna Hodge
April 2025

1. Strategic Enrollment & Student Success

Current Enrollment Status:

As of Spring 2025, our total enrollment is 5,903, continuing the regional and national trend of enrollment decline (down from 6,301 in 2023). Our plan to reverse this trend is comprehensive and focused:

- **Retention:** Improving our 73% first-to-second-year retention rate through expanded advising, engagement, and support services. Expand support for FYE.
- **Recruitment:** Enhancing outreach to first-generation, Hispanic, and non-traditional students, aligned with our trajectory toward Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) designation. Direct Admissions MOUs are being vetted across each of our 4 Fitchburg high schools (FHS, Monty Tech, Sizer, and St. Bernard's)
- **Exploring Graduate and Online Growth:** Broadening graduate, online, and professional programs to serve the evolving needs of North Central Massachusetts and beyond.
- **Exploring and Moving on (new) Emerging UG Programs**

SUCCESS Funds Implementation:

We were awarded **\$1.29 million in SUCCESS funds** from the Commonwealth to support innovative student success strategies (must be spent by September 2025). **Dr. Beth Swartz**, Director of TRIO and Student Support Services, is leading this effort by applying proven practices from TRIO and Upward Bound.

K-12 and Community Partnerships:

- **Fitchburg Public Schools Collaboration:**
 - Opening a mini-admissions center at Fitchburg High School in Summer 2025.
 - Supporting educators at McKay Arts Academy.
 - Advancing conversations around direct admissions.

Housing and Capacity Planning:

Two wings of Herlihy Hall were reopened in Spring 2025 to support enrollment and retention.

We are currently working with MSCBA and DCAMM to assess and modernize on- and off-campus housing—focused on better serving adult learners, international students, and students with families.

2. Financial Stewardship & Resource Development

CFO Search Launched:

As of April 1, we officially launched the search for a new Chief Financial Officer, which is being managed in-house. The position will play a vital role in aligning our financial planning with institutional priorities.

- The search committee is chaired by Provost and EVP Dr. Patricia Marshall and, in addition to 3 faculty, includes representation from cabinet, finance, operations, and advancement.
- **Applications are due by June 15, 2025.**

Budget Overview:

Our **\$120 million operating budget** continues to be carefully managed. Key fiscal strategies include:

- **Increasing fundraising revenue** beyond the current \$2.8M.
 - **Boosting alumni participation**, currently at 3.7%.
 - **Pursuing grants** in excess of the \$4.3M received in FY2023, through expanded work in the **Office of Research and Sponsored Programs**.
 - Supporting the state's new financial aid brand initiative developed by EOE and C+C to expand awareness and access.
-

3. Institutional Capacity & Governance

We are continuing to align our leadership structure to meet the challenges of modern higher education:

- The newly created Vice President of Personnel Services and General Counsel position, held by Stacey Luster, brings critical capacity in legal affairs, compliance, and personnel oversight.
- We are also extending two key student leadership programs:
 - **Presidential Ambassadors** and

- **Presidential Fellows**

Faculty leads will now play a more active role in supporting and expanding these engagement opportunities within the Office of the President, helping elevate student voice and leadership across campus.

4. Equity, Access, and HSI Progress

Fitchburg State remains deeply committed to educational equity and inclusion.

- We are actively pursuing HSI designation, which will open up critical funding and enhance services for our growing population of Latino/a students.
 - In January, I was selected to join the Presidents for Latino Student Success network through Excelencia in Education, which supports:
 - Institutional culture change.
 - Improved enrollment, retention, and graduation of Latino students.
 - Enhanced data systems and accountability.
 - Fitchburg State is also part of the Two-Year Journey to Intentionally SERVE Latino Students, a cohort-based program focused on measurable, systemic impact.
-

5. Investiture & Fundraising Gala

You are warmly invited to join me for my **Investiture** as the 12th—and first woman—President of Fitchburg State University:

Friday, April 25, 2025 | 3:30 PM

Weston Auditorium | Reception to follow

This is not only a personal milestone—it is a celebration of the enduring mission and evolving future of Fitchburg State University.

Investiture Weekend Fundraising Gala – Honoring Changemakers

On Saturday, April 26, 2025, we will host a gala to raise funds for student scholarships and success initiatives. During the evening, we will proudly recognize four honorees whose contributions elevate our campus and enrich the broader region:

- **Jim Todd** – Distinguished Alumnus
- **Anna Clementi** – Distinguished Service to the University
- **Ron Colbert** – Distinguished Service to Education
- **Luisa Fernandez** – Distinguished Service to the Community

These individuals exemplify the values of Fitchburg State through their service, advocacy, and leadership.

6. Advocacy and Key Engagements

In the past several months, we have increased our presence in critical state and federal advocacy spaces:

- **Feb. 10-11:** Council of Presidents meeting at MassArt
- **Feb. 11:** State House Higher Education Advocacy Day; spent the day at Beacon Hill.
- **Feb. 25:** Federal advocacy meetings in Washington, D.C. with congressional staff; Matt Bruun [along with Chief of Staff, Legislative Liaison, and Public Affairs colleagues from the other Massachusetts State Publics] represented FSU
- **Feb. 26:** Hosted small employee dinner at President's house
- **Feb-March:** Attended various department meetings
- **March 1:** SGA Alumni Event at Hammond Hall
- **March 2:** Fitchburg State Alumni Ski Day at Wachusett Mountain
- **March 3:** Peter Reynolds (A'83) Salon at President's house (faculty, Cabinet, and Invited Community Members)
- **March 4:** Peter Reynolds, Campus Open Forum (Hammond Hall). Livestreamed and recorded by FATV (available online)
- **March 8:** Hosted MASCAC Championship Ice Hockey game (vs. MCLA) at Wallace Civic Center (President Birge and family joined President and Dustin Hodge)
- **March 14-15:** Traveled to Utica with Men's Ice Hockey for NCAA D3 first round championship game
- **March 18-19-20:** Hosted and attended FSU/City of Fitchburg (joint) Emergency Management Training; included official MOU signing with President Hodge and Mayor Squalia
- **March 20:** Fitchburg Art Museum Board of Directors meeting
- **March 21:** Welcomed ROTEL (OER) Book Launch with faculty and campus leadership, including Assistant Commissioner for Academic Effectiveness Robert J. Awkward of the Department of Higher Education's Office of Academic Affairs and Student Success
- **March 22:** Future Falcon Day (8:30-9:30 a.m. Honors Breakfast welcome); campus event until 12:30 p.m.
- **March 25:** Taste of Nashoba Valley Event
- **March 26:** *Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts*, Women's Fund: Hosted on campus; President served as plenary speaker
- **March 27:** Crocker Center Community Event, Fitchburg Art Museum with faculty and community members and City of Fitchburg officials

- **March 27:** International Night at Hammond Hall (student event led by OIE, student groups, and dancers); open to community and all employees
 - **March 28:** Benefit Men's Club Lacrosse Game (in memory of Professor John Crawley); Senior Night at Elliot (hosted alums, Crawley Family, and Lacrosse parents)
 - **March 31:** Dinner, Worcester State COP
 - **April 1:** English Studies high school writing contest awards reception
 - **April 2:** Applewild Tour and meeting with Executive Director, Amy Jolly
 - **April 4:** Attended Fitchburg Mayor's Meeting; Onboarding, new Trustee, Shane Rodriguez
 - **April 5:** Future Falcon Day (8:30 a.m. Honors Breakfast reception); campus event until 12:30 p.m.
 - **April 7:** Speaker, National Student Athlete Honor Society Induction (Presidents' Hall)
 - **April 7:** Guest on "Inside Fitchburg" at FATV
 - **April 7:** Ice Hockey, Senior Banquet and awards ceremony
 - **April 8-9:** In person COP meeting, Westfield
 - **April 8:** Guest speaker in English Studies class on foundations of professional writing (Dr. Heather Urbanski)
 - **April 11:** Elizabeth Haskins Mathematics Contest (guest speaker); Spring Dance Show (evening)
 - **April 14:** Women's Lacrosse (hosting at Elliot Field), 5 to 7 p.m.
 - **April 15:** Attended FSU Concert Band and Community Orchestra Performance (Weston)
 - **April 17:** Undergraduate Conference for Research and Creative Practice; Scholarship Awards Celebration
 - **April 22:** MOU Signing MWCC and FSU
 - **April 25-26:** Presidential Investiture Ceremony and Fundraising Gala Celebration
 - **April 29-May 1:** I will participate at AASCU's national advocacy delegation in Washington, D.C
-

Closing Thoughts

Fitchburg State was founded to serve—and we remain committed to doing so boldly, equitably, and innovatively. The challenges we face are real, but our resolve is greater. This university has always been a place of second chances, bright futures, and resilient communities.

Thank you for your partnership, your stewardship, and your trust.

Onward,

Dr. Donna Hodge
President
Fitchburg State University

Divisional Reports

Academic Affairs

As the AY24-25 academic year comes to a close, Academic Affairs has made significant progress on the priorities established in our Summer 2024 retreat. Each of the **short-term initiatives** identified through our planning process were successfully executed by the end of the fall 2024 semester. The Division also advanced several **longer-range goals** (projected for AY25-26) and **ongoing cultural shifts** that require consistent focus.

To Complete in FA24	Medium Term AY25-26
ILPs through governance	Examine Academic Program Array: Eduventures
Launch MAICEI Program, with students to campus in FA24	Revise Academic Integrity Policy
Launch new Student Evaluation instrument, Explorance	Evaluate Pre-Registration, Orientation, and FYE
	Internationalization Plan (agents)
	Complete transition to Blackboard Ultra

ONGOING:

Morale – **Expand Creation & Use of OER** – **Better Integrate Day & SGOCE** – General Education Assessment – Diversify Faculty, Librarians, and Staff – Foster AI Literacy - Modality

We revised our Institutional Learning Priorities (ILPs) after a thorough process to expand them to include graduate students. (Our previous ILPs were heavily weighted to our undergraduate programs.) The process included researching ILPs at similar institutions, sharing draft revisions with departments and graduate program chairs, surveying constituents for feedback, and seeing the proposal through shared governance

Our first MAICEI students matriculated on campus in Fall 2024. Funded through the DHE, the 2022 MAICEI legislation requires colleges and universities to create opportunities for 18-21-year-old students with identified intellectual disabilities. Academic Affairs also successfully implemented the new course evaluation instrument bargained between the MSCA and the

Council of State University Presidents. The instrument, called Explorance, will be leveraged again at the conclusion of the spring 2025 semester.

Progress on our medium-term goals includes establishing the groundwork to “Examine Academic Program Array” through Eduventures. We submitted data related to enrollments, retention and graduation rates and the admissions funnel to Eduventures, and we are on track to have their completed analysis by this fall. Progress also continues on the revision of our Academic Integrity Policy, through close collaboration between Student Success, the Library, and the Dean of Students. That policy will be prepared for governance in Fall 2025.

We are also continuing to advance ongoing priorities, including our commitment to Open Educational Resources (OER). We have built OER into the operating budget of the library for FY26 to continue increasing the number of free, open resources that are designed to bring down costs for students pursuing higher education. Recognized in the Commonwealth as an OER leader, Fitchburg State faculty authors have created ten new OER textbooks; these projects have resulted in savings of more than \$1.1 million in textbook costs for students during AY2024.

The Academic Affairs leadership team is looking forward to our Summer 2025 Retreat at which we will revisit and recalibrate our strategic and ongoing priorities for the upcoming academic year. We anticipate making significant progress on our ongoing initiative of better integrating Day and SGOCE operations, elevating collaborations between Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, and Student Affairs to create a more intentional onboarding experience for our students (pre-registration, orientation, and FYE), and finalizing our new Academic Integrity policy. Additional details will be provided on these areas of emphasis in the Academic Affairs presentation at the April BOT meeting.

Student Affairs

The Division of Student Affairs plays a significant role in attracting, supporting, and retaining students at the university. Ensuring students’ safety and welfare is an integral part of these efforts. Below, please find a discussion of the emerging and evolving challenges in Student Affairs’ work, as well as examples of how the Division has addressed these challenges with intention and innovation.

Our students’ needs are more complex, more chronic, and (often) more impactful than ever before. At times, students’ challenges stress the existing systems in place to address them as mechanisms of student support have, historically, presumed that student needs are episodic, and often limited to a singular or narrow area of need. Student Affairs increasingly recognizes the

value in multi-departmental, multi-disciplinary approaches to innovating in how we assess, manage, and program to our students' concerns and needs for engagement.

- The university's multidisciplinary CARE Team has assessed and provided case management for 567 referred students thus far in the 2024-2025 academic year, representing a 92% increase over last year. Where many referrals concern student welfare and academic engagement, the CARE Team also routinely engages in risk assessment and behavioral intervention with students who may present a threat to the larger university community. A recent partnership with the National Association for Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment has yielded significant benefit. The Office of CARE and Case Management has now been formalized at the University, with a Director appointed and a search now underway for a Case Manager to address growing needs in this area.
- The University recently launched the Falcons Care Center, a self-service directory that matches users' stated concerns to appropriate on-campus and local resources. In the first several weeks following its launch, the Falcons Care Center has had significant engagement, with 453 unique views.
- Amid rising mental health concerns in the student body, the Counseling Services Office is building capacity in non-clinical self-care options (e.g., two new "Wellness Rooms" in Hammond, a recent multi-departmental "Wellness Fair").
- Utilizing grant funding from the Commonwealth, the Disability Services Office is offering opportunities to students to participate in psychoeducational evaluations with a local provider, in the hope of supporting students whose struggles may be secondary to unidentified disabilities.
- The national political climate and rhetoric are increasingly impacting our students. Student Affairs professionals routinely hear stories of fear, anxiety, and (for many) perceived targeting and marginalization. Student Affairs departments provide opportunities and programming to all students that contribute to a sense of community and belonging (e.g., February's Black History Month and March's Women's History Month, sponsored by the Center for Diversity and Inclusiveness).
- Related to the above, the Division of Student Affairs houses three federally grant-funded programs (TRIO Student Support Services, Upward Bound, and Upward Bound Math and Science). Students in these programs, and the staff members who support them, are demonstrating remarkable positivity and perseverance as they navigate ongoing messaging regarding the vulnerability of continued support for their programs.

Financial Services

Fiscal year 2025 enrollment, revenue, and expenses continue to be stable and within range of projections. As the third quarter closes, we are closely monitoring activities and are cautiously

optimistic the university will end the year within expected parameters. The university is actively reviewing cash flow, investment portfolios and financial assets to ensure alignment with efficient and effective financial resource management. We have had some movement with collective bargaining agreements and the process is continuing to take place throughout the remainder of the year. Capital projects continue with the Conlon Hall window replacement project totaling \$2,604,400 underway with expected completion this summer and we have received the State University Success funding of \$1,297,587.

The FY2026 budget development is proceeding with the focus on bringing greater transparency and strategic oversight to our fiscal planning with a firm commitment to clear priority setting and a forward-looking strategy for growth. The fiscal year 2026 governor's budget was released with Fitchburg State University FY26 proposal of \$45,487,590 this is compared to the fiscal year FY2025 GAA of \$41,993,969. University and state administration continue to actively advocate for funding models that support the mission and goals of Fitchburg State University. FY2026 Budget proposals will be brought forward at the next Board Meeting.

Student accounts continued activities through January with a focus on spring billing and resolving fall balances to increase opportunity for spring enrollment. Student accounts provided support for mandatory reporting, completed 1098T tax filing with the official data file loaded to the IRS the last week of March meeting filing deadline requirements. The office also assisted with the VA audit which was successful with no findings. Major projects and enhancements continue with the collaborative project with SGOCE to prepare and roll out the new billing due date process for SGOCE students. This process change is the identified solution to significant challenges the current process presents to staff and students. Additional process improvement reviews continue for proper alignment of university course drop/withdrawal refund policy, the drop/add period practice, write-offs paid in current year tracking and allocation and exemption allocation.

Staffing transitions continue. Staff vacancies include the Director of Procurement, Accountant IV, and Budget Director. Several positions are in the active process of hiring while others are ready to begin the search process in the coming months. Contract employees have joined the team to support the office in these transitions and include Robert LaBonte, an executive professional with over 28 years of commonwealth higher education Finance and Administration experience. Bob will be working with President Hodge and Heidi Swift Executive in Charge of Finance. Additionally accountant Patricia Boudreau, former financial services employee has rejoined the team and will be supporting the accounting department. During April the Finance office is moving locations and will all be located together in Sanders lower level. This central and consolidated location will aid in business process, the application of business continuity plans and enhanced customer service to the students, staff, college community and constituents we serve.

Enrollment Management

For the purpose of this update, Enrollment Management includes the Office of Admissions, the Office of Student Financial Aid Services, the Office of Marketing and Integrated Communication, and Print Services.

Office of Admissions

Staffing

- A new position has been created in partnership with Fitchburg Public Schools. This search process will begin in April and with the goal of establishing a full time staff member to be physically housed at a satellite office within Fitchburg High School effective summer 2025.
- Collaborating with SGOCE and International Education for proposal to engage international agents for recruitment starting Fall 2026
- Additional touchpoint to admitted students - created new “Next Steps” magnets and mailed to all admitted students

Data

Current data for fall 2025 (*reflective of admission year to date (YTD) funnel; snapshot 3/27/2025*)

Current as of 03/27/2025 at 02:31:27 PM ET [Refresh](#)

Total year to date Fall 2025								
Metric	Total Apps	Apps Not Submitted	Incomplete Apps	Ready for Review	Awaiting Confirmation	Accept	Deny	Net Deposits
Fall 2025	4337	130	451	22	1	3296	385	213
FR	4043	97	333	17	1	3181	379	195
T	294	33	118	5		115	6	18
Residential Deposit								
FR	127					127		126
T	4					4		4
Total	131					131		130
Commuter Deposit								
FR	69					69		69
T	14					14		14
Total	83					83		83
Total year to date Fall 2024								
Metric	Total Apps	Apps Not Submitted	Incomplete Apps	Ready for Review	Awaiting Confirmation	Accept	Deny	Net Deposits
Fall 2024	5391	161	206			3882	503	195
FR	5011	126	178			3735	497	169
T	380	35	28			147	6	26
Residential Deposit								
FR	116					116		116
T	3					3		3
Total	119					119		119
Commuter Deposit								
FR	53					53		53
T	24					24		23
Total	77					77		76

Events

- Future Falcon Day(s) -
 - Saturday, March 22, 2025 - 373 guests attended; 13 deposits received on site;
 - Honors Breakfast - 36 attended
 - opened reservations for summer orientation (new!)
 - Saturday, April 5, 2025 - 335 reserved (as of 3/28/25)
 - Honors Breakfast - 22 reserved (as of 3/28/25)
- Saturday Information Session (SIS); Saturday, April 26, 2025;
 - 22 reserved as of 3/28/25
- Recruitment events for spring 2025
 - Participating in more than 100 individual regional college and career events throughout New England.
 - Twilight Tours (campus visits offered after 5pm weekdays)
 - Department visits; smaller academic focused tours, meetings with faculty and class shadow opportunities throughout the month of March and April
- Candidate Reply Deadline (CRD) - May 1, 2025 - National priority deposit date

Student Financial Aid Services

Staffing

- Presented at several First Year Experience (FYE) courses regarding financial aid and financial management
- Participated in the University Wellness Fair, hosted by Counseling Services, and Commuter Services Information Sessions
- Led discussion with Career Services on the topics of salary negotiations for new graduates and financial literacy events
- Provided planned office hours in collaboration with TRIO/SSS programming.
- Participated in more than 15 regional financial aid information sessions for students and families
- Collaborating with campus colleagues and academic departments to award new S-STEM awards

Data

- Weekly downloads of ISIR documents and data for the fall 2025 financial aid awarding cycle.
- Issued 2,194 financial aid packages to admitted new students - 69% of admitted students successfully packaged
 - February 18, 2025 (original target was March 1); subsequent mailings go every Thursday throughout spring and summer

Marketing & Integrated Communication

Staffing

- Proposed the expansion of an additional staff line to assist with the coordination of both UG marketing efforts as well as provide support to the social/new media efforts (currently managing 15+ different accounts)

Data

- [Social Media Analytics](#); as of 3/27/25; a breakdown of most recent social media platforms and marketing impact (we have over 10K views on many videos on Instagram reels and some on TikTok organically).
 - President Hodge social media followers (Accounts started in July 2024):
 - Instagram: 883
 - Facebook: 298
 - Threads: 64
 - University Accounts
 - Facebook: 14,516
 - Instagram: 7,178 (FSU Collab; 27.5K views)
 - Twitter (X): 4,853
 - LinkedIn: 36,180
 - YouTube: 1,050
 - TikTok: 2,739
 - Threads: 1,140
 - School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education Accounts
 - Facebook: 3,013
 - Twitter (X): 311
 - LinkedIn: 2,238

Events

- Conducted in-person meetings during the month of February with university colleagues for Social Media Advisory Board
- Expanded production of “One Minute Major” series; most recent is the 4+1 police Program
- Blogs - 110+ blogs posted since Fall 2024
 - <https://blog.fitchburgstate.edu/all>

Veterans Services

New priority on recruiting and serving this population. Collaboration between FSUPD, and EM to review, evaluate, and make proposals regarding staffing, services offered and programmatic offerings.

Staffing

- Welcomed new Director of Military & Veterans Services Nolan Buck (reporting to Michael Cloutier, Operations)
 - Began service to Fitchburg State University on March 18

Housing / Contracts / Real Estate

Over the last few months, our work has played a critical role in ensuring that our Auxiliary Services partners feel supported and are effectively meeting the needs of our students and the greater community. Since January, we have established regular meetings with Chartwells, the Follett Bookstore, FMC (which manages the Wallace Civic Center), and other key partners. These meetings focus on providing necessary resources and strengthening these partnerships to better serve the Fitchburg community while ensuring that we follow contracts that are in place.

We have also formalized two additional partnerships, with plans to publicly recognize them on campus during the week of the President's investiture.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed between Fitchburg State and Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) to allow MWCC students to reside on campus while enrolled at MWCC. The MWCC Housing Program at Fitchburg State is a collaborative initiative designed to meet the needs of MWCC students seeking a residential college experience. A formal signing will take place on April 22 on campus, with President Vander Hooven and his team attending alongside several MWCC students.

Additionally, an MOU has been signed to establish a Fitchburg State Admissions Center within Fitchburg High School. This dedicated space will serve as a direct access point for students and families to engage with Fitchburg State's admissions team, providing guidance on college readiness, application processes, financial aid, and available academic programs. While planning is already underway, a formal recognition of this MOU will take place in April.

In Housing and Residential Services, we are excited to announce the promotion of Kris Braun to Director of Housing and Residential Services. Braun will oversee the Residence Education team while continuing to support housing operations, ensuring a seamless experience for our students.

Additionally, a new housing software was implemented during the Spring semester, allowing students to have an updated software that provides additional ways to engage with students and manage occupancy, operations and the financial aspects. This project would not have been possible without the close collaboration with the Technology Department. As we look to future housing occupancy, selection for returning students will begin in April, with the process for new and transfer students being opened earlier than in the past.

Looking ahead to the summer, MSCBA will be running multiple projects on campus to address deferred maintenance. This includes exterior and window replacements, along with critical updates in Town House 5, as well as boiler replacements in Town House 1 and Cedar Street. This represents the largest MSCBA-funded campus improvement initiative in several years, marking a significant investment in our facilities.

Athletics & Recreation

During the February Board of Trustees meeting, members of our men's ice hockey team shared their student-athlete experiences and their determination to capture a conference championship. Their dedication paid off when they secured a 3-1 victory over MCLA on March 8, claiming their first ice hockey championship since 2018. A packed Wallace Civic Center, despite it being the first weekend of spring break, provided the Falcons with a crucial home-ice advantage that helped propel the team to victory.

The conference championship is the culmination of months and years of hard work by the student-athletes and also our coaching staff, led by head coach Dean Fuller. The championship day transcended the game itself, featuring a vibrant tailgate hosted by President Hodge and opportunities for alumni to return to campus and reconnect with the university and prospective students to connect with admissions. This university-wide collaborative effort ensured a memorable and successful event.

Following their conference triumph, the team earned the right to play in the NCAA Division III national tournament, traveling to and competing against Utica University. While their postseason journey concluded with that game, we are immensely proud of their competitive spirit and performance and look forward to many successful seasons ahead.

The hockey team's success also extends beyond the ice rink and into the classroom. Notably, the men's ice hockey team achieved the highest average GPA among all athletic teams in our department during the fall semester, with a 3.44. Close behind were softball (3.41) and women's lacrosse (3.28). In addition to the team academic success we also had several student-athletes excel academically including, 11 student-athletes earning a perfect 4.0 GPA, and 162 athletes named to the Dean's List, requiring a minimum GPA of 3.2.

Acknowledging that many student-athletes face challenges in transitioning from high school to college academics and balancing their athletic and academic commitments, we have established a new Athletics Academic Success Advisor position. Funded by a state student success grant, this role will provide targeted academic support and success initiatives, directly aiming to improve academic performance, retention, and graduation rates. This position will enable us to

offer the specialized support our student-athletes need to thrive academically, which we believe will significantly enhance their overall success in both academics and athletics.

We are pleased to announce that Laura Pierce, our current head women's basketball coach, will transition to this pivotal new role. Laura's extensive experience working with our student-athletes, from recruitment to graduation, makes her an ideal leader for this initiative. Ultimately, our goal is to equip every student-athlete with the tools necessary to achieve their full potential in the classroom, fostering the confidence to excel in their athletic pursuits.

Personnel Services and General Counsel

In the first 12 weeks of the newly established Office of the Vice President of Personnel Services and General Counsel, Vice President Stacey Luster has focused on people, policies, processes, and priorities.

Fitchburg State University is widely recognized for its welcoming and dedicated staff, faculty, and students, who proudly identify as Falcons. To formally acknowledge and honor the existing expertise within the university, the Human Resources Director was promoted to Executive Director of Personnel Services, now providing oversight to Human Resources, Payroll, and Title IX and Equal Opportunity. The Payroll Director was relocated to a new office, and a storage closet was renovated by Capital Planning and Maintenance to accommodate the newly vacant Director of Human Resources position.

The university benefits from a core group of "Double Falcons" who are teaching and leading, allowing operations to function effectively based on past practice and institutional memory. As General Counsel, Luster is collaborating with stakeholders to develop a process to formally review, memorialize, and communicate administrative policies and procedures.

Fitchburg State University maintains thriving clinical programs supported by affiliation agreements with institutions across the country. Luster is working with academic departments to ensure these critical and limited clinical partnership sites are preserved while safeguarding the university's interests. She is also collaborating with the School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education to sustain Extended Campus Partnerships—ensuring fair market terms and conditions and protecting the Fitchburg State brand.

In addition, Luster is actively engaged in reviewing and negotiating numerous university contracts with vendors, including those related to Capital Planning and Management, Information Technology, insurance, real estate, licensing, and the PACE Cooperative Purchasing Agreement for university and community college bookstores. She is working with university

stakeholders to develop strategic processes that allow for adequate time and data to support decisions that best serve Fitchburg State University.

Although prepared to take on responsibilities including collective bargaining, labor relations, and employee morale, Luster has also taken on significant and unanticipated responsibilities related to federal funding, immigration, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. As a result, standing bi-weekly meetings with General Counsel from Framingham, Massachusetts College of Art, Salem, Westfield, and the Community Colleges have become weekly and now include participation from the Council of Presidents (COP) Attorney and the Chief Legal Counsel for the Department of Higher Education (DHE), as needed.

Additionally, Luster participates in new, bi-weekly meetings led by the Attorney General's Office (AGO), which have become invaluable for discussing executive orders and court filings that could impact public higher education institutions and individual members of the campus community. These meetings now also include the Deputy General Counsel for the DHE and the Deputy General Counsel for the University of Massachusetts, creating a vital cross-institutional legal network.

University Advancement

Fundraising Highlights:

- **Scholarship Award Ceremony:** previously named Convocation - an event on April 17 where students are awarded endowed or departmental scholarships for the next academic year. This year, over 250 awards will be distributed, totaling more than \$250,000.
- **State Match:** The Public Higher Education Endowment Incentive Program requires us to generate new endowments to be matched, one dollar from the state for every two dollars per each new endowment created.
 - Between confirmed and pending commitments, we are approaching eligibility for more than \$550,000 in state matching funds.
- **Gifts to date:** As of March 26, \$1,189,817 was committed from 1,601 gifts.

Alumni Events Highlight:

- Nominations for 2025 Alumni Awards, committee is reviewing:
 - Leadership
 - Achievement
 - Service
 - Young Alumni
 - Booster

- Nominations for Alumni Board Members
 - There are three, three-year terms available
 - We received five nominations
 - Interviews with candidates are underway
 - Final slate to be presented at April 10 Alumni Board Meeting
- Recent Alumni events:
 - February 22 - Sigma Pi Founders Day Brunch - **43 attendees**
 - February 22 - Alumni Ice Hockey Game and Reunion - **22 attendees**
 - February 23-25 - Atom Moore '05 Residency:
 - February 23 - Private gallery reception with watch collectors
 - February 24 - Photography workshops
 - February 25 - Public forum
 - March 1 - Student Government Association Reunion - **33 attendees**
 - March 2 - Fitchburg State Date at Wachusett Mountain - **42 attendees**
 - March 3-4 - Peter Reynolds '83 Residency:
 - March 3 - Reception at Iver Johnson House
 - March 4 - Sessions with elementary students at McKay, lunch with faculty and Fitchburg State students, public forum moderated by President Hodge
 - These sessions with the elementary students were interactive, with Peter having them draw along with him.
 - The public discussion was well attended and Peter had the audience draw with him again.
 - Peter commented after the visit, "What a tremendous experience last week! Still savoring! Back soon!"
 - March 22 - Alumni participation in Future Falcon Day
- Upcoming Alumni Events:
 - **March 29** - Veterans Panel, Resource Fair and Reunion - Estimated attendance: 35 attendees
 - **April 5** - Alumni participation in Future Falcon Day
 - **April 10** - Alumni Board Meeting
 - **April 12** - Dance Club Reunion
 - **April 23** - Participation in VISIONS
 - **April 25-26** - Investiture and Gala
 - **May 3** - Josh Spero retirement gathering for Economics/History/Political Science Alumni
 - **May 8** - Alumni participation in last day of classes celebration - Lemonade bar
 - **May 10** - Nursing Reunion
 - **May 15** - Alumni participation in Graduate Commencement
 - **May 17** - Alumni participation in Undergraduate Commencement
 - **May 31** - Fenwick's Founders Day

- o **June 5** - Alumni Board Meeting
- o **June 10** - Men's Basketball Golf Tournament
- o **June 23** - Ice Hockey Golf Tournament
- o **June 24 or 25** - Retired Educators Lunch
- Upcoming events to mark on your calendar:
 - o Planning started for Cape Cod events on July 16, 17 & 18
 - o Planning started for Homecoming 2025 (10/3 - 10/5)
 - o Planning started for Class of 1975 50th Reunion (9/27)
 - o Planning started for Moot Court Anniversary Reunion (11/22)

Annual Fund Highlights:

- **Jeff Godin Appeal:** Launched appeal to raise \$125,000 for a scholarship and weight room updates, including a naming opportunity in memory of a deceased faculty member. Initial outreach to major donors and corporate supporters is underway. A soft-launch giving page has raised \$900 from 8 gifts.
- **Business Administration (B.A.) Departmental Appeal:** Launched appeal to raise \$20,000 for the financial literacy center in Percival Hall. Secured a verbal commitment for \$10,000, contingent on raising a matching \$10,000.
- **Harrod Scholarship Campaign:** Following a successful \$25,000 campaign, a new campaign for an additional \$50,000 is in progress. Secured a verbal commitment for \$25,000, contingent on raising a matching \$25,000.
- **Planned Giving:** The February Planned Giving campaign resulted in 4 new planned gifts with an approximate future value of \$205,000.
- **Athletics Fundraising:** working with athletic teams on yearly fundraising.
 - o FYTD Ice Hockey: 80 Gifts, \$13,880
 - o FYTD Men's Baseball: 33 Gifts, \$2,721
 - o FYTD Women's Softball: 41 Gifts, \$2,470
 - o FYTD Women's Basketball: 46 Gifts, \$3,690
 - o FYTD Cheerleading: 20 Gifts, \$790
- **Moot Court 25th Anniversary Appeal:** to include past Moot Court alumni, participants, judges, supporters, and sponsors. Production of 'save the date' mailings and a giving page.
- **Presidential Investiture Sponsorship:** An appeal was sent to 167 potential sponsors for the Presidential Investiture.

University Operations

University Police Department

Crisis Management Training

Members of the Fitchburg State University Emergency Management Team, President Hodge's Cabinet, and personnel from the City Police and Fire Departments recently participated in a three-day Crisis Management Training. The course was provided by Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX).

Emphasizing a whole community approach, the course "Crisis Management Affecting Institutions of Higher Education: A Collaborative Community Approach" provided campus and community stakeholders with training on their specific duties and responsibilities in effectively managing a range of crisis situations.

The curriculum placed significant emphasis on risk management strategies, effective crisis communication protocols, and the development of comprehensive plans as outlined by the National Incident Management Systems (NIMS). To facilitate the identification of potential deficiencies in our current crisis management framework, the course incorporated case studies and interactive activities, culminating in a practical, simulated role-play exercise.

During a pause in the training, President Hodge and Fitchburg Mayor Samantha Squailia signed a new agreement for reciprocal emergency support. This memorandum of understanding details how the university and city agencies will collaborate and provide mutual aid, joint training, drills, and the use of space for emergency needs like family reunification.

Promotion of Lieutenant Richard Nelson to the rank of Captain

Given Chief Cloutier's recently expanded portfolio, which now includes oversight for the new Director of Military and Veterans Services, as well as Capital Planning & Maintenance, the identification of a distinct second in command for the University Police Department was deemed increasingly necessary.

On March 23, Lieutenant Richard Nelson was promoted to the rank of Captain. Nelson served in the United States Army for six years, attaining the rank of Sergeant. He also served for 25 years as a police officer in the state of New Hampshire, retiring at the rank of Sergeant.

Nelson earned a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from Franklin Pierce University and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of New Hampshire.

Since coming to Fitchburg State in July of 2020, Captain Nelson's exceptional leadership has been evident. He has skillfully managed and supervised personnel, fostered strong teamwork and morale, and has been a mentor to many of our officers. Moreover, Captain Nelson has

consistently made sound decisions under pressure, demonstrating the critical thinking and problem-solving abilities necessary for effective leadership.

The strategic promotion of Richard Nelson to Captain will strengthen the department's leadership capacity, ultimately enhancing its ability to serve the community effectively. His demonstrated leadership, strong track record, and commitment to professional growth made him the right choice for this role.

Therapy Dog Program

Recognizing the value of police therapy dogs in enhancing officer well-being and building stronger community trust, the Fitchburg State University Police Department is excited about its future therapy dog program. Their unique ability to provide comfort and reduce stress makes them a growing asset in modern policing. Officer Patrick Spooner, a military veteran, is currently completing the required obedience and K9 good citizen training with 6-month-old Zara. We look forward to Zara's presence on campus soon as part of her socialization training.

Some benefits of a therapy dog for our community include:

- **Improved Community Relations:** Therapy dogs can act as "icebreakers" during community events, fostering positive interactions and building trust between officers and the public. Their presence can make law enforcement more approachable and accessible.
- **Victim Support:** Therapy dogs can provide comfort and emotional support to victims of crime, especially during interviews or court proceedings. They can help reduce anxiety and make the legal process less traumatic, particularly for children.
- **Crisis Response:** With proper training, therapy dogs can assist in crisis situations by providing a calming presence and helping to de-escalate tense situations.
- **Educational Outreach:** Therapy dogs can be incorporated into educational programs in schools and community centers, helping to build positive relationships with law enforcement from a young age.
- **Increased Community Engagement:** Therapy dogs can attract community members to police-sponsored events, increasing engagement and fostering a sense of partnership.



“Zara”

Capital Planning and Maintenance

Oversight Transition

Effective February 19, Michael Cloutier's title was revised to Chief of Police and Executive in Charge of University Operations, reflecting his expanded duties to include cabinet-level oversight of Capital Planning and Maintenance, with an emphasis on strategic leadership, campus safety, emergency preparedness, and university wide integration.

Shoulder Seasons

As the campus transitions from winter to spring, Capital Planning and Maintenance (CPM) confronts distinct infrastructure challenges, requiring coordinated, multi-trade responses to both interior and exterior needs.

Winter's lingering effects are being addressed through extensive grounds renewal. Freeze-thaw damage and snow removal impacts have necessitated turf repair, landscape restoration, and walkway stabilization. We're assessing ground heaving which impacted walkways and curbing, while prioritizing athletic field preparation. This includes turf grooming, surface restoration, irrigation reactivation, and equipment checks to ensure readiness for the spring season.

As we transition HVAC systems from heating to cooling, fluctuating spring temperatures pose operational challenges. Facilities is calibrating systems for optimal performance, energy efficiency, and occupant comfort. To improve service and communication, we've launched a resident education initiative, providing customized HVAC 'Tips and Tricks' guides for each

residential building. These guides aim to enhance understanding, reduce service calls, and improve resident comfort and energy conservation.

Capital Projects

Conlon Hall is the focus of several DCAMM-coordinated initiatives. Window replacements to improve thermal efficiency will begin soon, alongside IT/CIO suite renovations to support future building upgrades. Third-floor bathroom renovations, addressing accessibility needs, are scheduled for this summer, with plans to renovate all bathrooms in phases.

Holmes roofing is nearing completion, with final paperwork and commissioning ongoing. Weston Hall's roof replacement starts after Commencement to address critical maintenance. The Recreation Center's solar installation is complete and being inspected, set to generate 50% of its annual electricity within weeks.

As Spring unfolds, our team is dedicating significant effort to supporting major campus events like Dr. Hodge's Investiture and Commencement. These events demand detailed planning and seamless operational execution, and CPM is committed to presenting all facilities in optimal condition.

The team in Capital Planning and Maintenance remains dedicated to providing reliable infrastructure, effective service delivery, and continuous improvement for the university community. We express our gratitude to the Board for their continued support of these essential endeavors.

Technology

The Technology Department continues to make meaningful progress in modernizing campus infrastructure, enhancing user support services, and reinforcing cybersecurity safeguards, all while preparing for anticipated budgetary constraints. This reporting period reflects a balanced combination of strategic advancement and prudent realignment in response to rising software costs and an increasingly complex security landscape.

Personnel Update

We are pleased to announce the promotion of Andrew Taylor to the position of EDP Systems Analyst III. Andrew will assume a lead role in managing endpoint systems and devices across campus, with particular responsibility for our Jamf and Microsoft Endpoint Manager/Intune platforms. His appointment marks a positive step forward in maintaining high service standards at our Help Desk. We will now look to fill the resulting vacancy in the EDP Systems Analyst II position.

Budget Considerations

The proposed FY26 Technology Department budget submitted to Finance reflects a modest increase of \$30,000 under our internal zero-based budgeting model. This growth is primarily driven by inflation in software licensing, and some known impact of new tariffs on hardware. While we achieved significant cost savings, most notably \$250,000 from the cancellation of EAB Edify licensing, other areas are seeing sharp increases. Our Oracle database licensing is expected to double, and recent changes in VMware's licensing structure following its acquisition by Broadcom could result in exponential cost increases of up to 500% due to a shift to per-core licensing.

To address these challenges, we are implementing a more rigorous software request process. All future requests must clearly outline the business need and funding source, helping ensure long-term sustainability and budget predictability. Additionally, we are working closely with campus stakeholders to evaluate underutilized software, reduce redundant licenses, and discontinue unnecessary renewals.

Currently, all new software purchases are funded through the T16 Technology Fee Trust Fund, which is supported by student fees. Continued reliance on this fund without increasing revenue may necessitate future fee increases—an outcome we are keen to avoid.

Infrastructure and Services

As part of a broader infrastructure modernization initiative, our Core Services team successfully upgraded the university's Ellucian Banner ERP database systems to new Linux servers. These updated systems provide enhanced performance, security, and vendor support. We also introduced a dedicated batch-processing server to improve system efficiency and reduce disruption to core database functions.

On the user services front, the implementation of Extron GlobalViewer Enterprise was completed. This platform enhances classroom technology support by enabling centralized monitoring and faster troubleshooting. The project included the installation of network connectivity in classrooms, server deployment, and staff training to ensure operational readiness.

Following our release Google AI tools Gemini and NotebookLM, the department conducted training sessions for faculty and staff. These sessions focused on generative AI applications and improved research workflows, supporting the adoption of these institution-approved technologies for faculty and staff. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and we remain committed to ongoing support and training.

Cybersecurity Enhancements

Our cybersecurity initiatives continue to evolve in response to both emerging threats and compliance requirements. This quarter, we extended Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) protections to restricted internal services, further fortifying our security posture.

We also launched a series of third-party security assessments aligned with PCI-DSS, GLBA, and NIST frameworks, supported in part by funding from the Commonwealth. These assessments will help validate our safeguards and identify improvement areas, with final reports expected by early summer.

In parallel, we completed a critical transition to a new payment processing solution within the OneCard Transaction System. This shift addresses rising costs, resolves end-of-life concerns with the previous provider, and ensures ongoing PCI compliance.

An annual penetration test was conducted in partnership with a cybersecurity firm, serving as a proactive measure to identify vulnerabilities and inform remediation strategies.

Finally, in response to a surge in phone-based “vishing” scams targeting university personnel, we collaborated with key offices, including the Registrar, to revise internal procedures and deliver targeted awareness sessions. These efforts are strengthening our community’s ability to detect and respond to evolving social engineering threats.

Communications and Public Affairs

The Spring semester is always a busy period for this office, supporting recurring major events including the annual scholarship awards and commencement, and this year’s milestone celebrations including the investiture of President Hodge and subsequent gala celebration. This office continues to prepare program components including scripted remarks for these events, ensuring the messaging and themes are consistent with university objectives. The office is also supporting logistical arrangements for these events, including communications with speakers, invited guests, and media outreach.

The executive director traveled to Washington, D.C. in February with counterparts from the State University system to advocate with the state delegation in Congress on topics of concern to higher education. These productive discussions covered the vital role our institutions serve in our respective regions. The delegation also heard perspectives from the campuses on issues related to executive orders, student debt, and infrastructure funding. The legislators voiced their support for these objectives and the value and importance of our institutions to supporting vital populations in the Commonwealth.

The executive director joined colleagues from Marketing and Integrated Communications as well as Alumni and Development for the CASE (Council for the Advancement and Support of Education) District 1 conference in Boston in March. The CASE conference featured a robust array of speakers and presentations sharing innovative and best practices for telling institutional stories, engaging internal and external populations, and fundraising campaigns. Given the scope of the university contingent, attendees were able to spread out and experience a wide variety of presentations.

Along with other members of the university's Emergency Management team, the executive director joined Cabinet for an intensive three-day training presented by Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX). This comprehensive course, Crisis Management Affecting Institutions of Higher Education: A Collaborative Community Approach, was an engaging and informative exploration of best practices to navigate crises. The trainers employed real-world examples and robust class participation to generate productive dialogues. The executive director previously attended TEEX trainings in 2015 and 2016, and this experience was improved by the thorough involvement of senior campus leadership.

The program also included an opportunity to celebrate the signing of a memorandum of agreement on emergency management between the university and the City of Fitchburg. The program received media attention and allowed the campus to celebrate what our external trainers frequently described was an unusual and productive collaboration between the university and its host community.

Related, the executive director continues to work with the Office of the President in support of university outreach efforts and partnerships with external organizations, including municipal and civic groups.

Beyond those high-profile efforts, this office also developed and disseminated a variety of internal communications, including operational updates and the biweekly [campus newsletter](#). The executive director also supported the Athletics Department with media relations following the NCAA Tournament [game](#) on March 15 in Utica, N.Y., and created additional content for its [digital magazine](#) platform.

The office continues to respond to public records requests, including time-sensitive collection and review of requested materials. The search process for a new associate director of communications was initiated during this period, with wide interest in the post. A committee will begin evaluating candidates.

Media links:

- FSU announces best-selling author as speaker at 2025 commencement, Sentinel & Enterprise, March 27, 2025: <https://www.sentinelandenterprise.com/2025/03/27/fsu-announces-best-selling-author-as-speaker-at-2025-commencement/>
- Fitchburg State welcomes new director of military and vet services, Sentinel & Enterprise, March 20, 2025: <https://www.sentinelandenterprise.com/2025/03/20/fitchburg-state-welcomes-new-director-of-military-and-vet-services/>
- Center for Italian Culture celebrates Yogi Berra doc “It Ain’t Over,” Sentinel & Enterprise, March 9, 2025: <https://www.sentinelandenterprise.com/2025/03/09/center-for-italian-culture-presents-yogi-berra-doc-it-aint-over/>
- A Chance to Celebrate Fitchburg State, Sentinel & Enterprise, March 6, 2025: <https://www.sentinelandenterprise.com/2025/03/06/a-chance-to-celebrate-fitchburg-state/>
- FSU welcomes best-selling author Peter H. Reynolds back to campus March 4, Sentinel & Enterprise, Feb. 21, 2025: <https://www.sentinelandenterprise.com/2025/02/21/fsu-welcomes-best-selling-author-peter-h-reynolds-back-to-campus-march-4/>

Fitchburg State Magazine:

- Don’t Grow Up: Peter H. Reynolds ‘83: <https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/magazine/article/dont-grow>
- Something Bigger Than Yourself (SGA Reunion): <https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/magazine/article/something-bigger-yourself>

Coversheet

Enrollment Management Update

Section:	III. President's Report
Item:	C. Enrollment Management Update
Purpose:	Discuss
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Enrollment Update - April.pdf


FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Total year to date Fall 2024

Metric	Total Apps	Apps Not Submitted	Incomplete Apps	Ready for Review	Awaiting Confirmation	Accept	Deny	Net Deposits
Fall 2024	5492	160	211			3910	510	220
FR	5088	126	182			3752	504	187
T	404	34	29			158	6	33
Residential Deposit								
FR	126					126		126
T	6					6		6
Total	132					132		132
Commuter Deposit								
FR	61					61		61
T	28					28		27
Total	89					89		88



Total year to date Fall 2025

Metric	Total Apps	Apps Not Submitted	Incomplete Apps	Ready for Review	Awaiting Confirmation	Accept	Deny	Net Deposits
Fall 2025	4428	123	488	17	10	3336	396	226
FR	4117	92	360	16	5	3213	390	206
T	311	31	128	1	5	123	6	20
Residential Deposit								
FR	136					136		135
T	6					6		6
Total	142					142		141
Commuter Deposit								
FR	72					72		71
T	14					14		14
Total	86					86		85

Year to Date - April 3rd Fall 2025 v. Fall 2024

	2025	2024	Δ
Admits	3336	3910	-574
Deposited	226	220	+6
Residential Deposits	135	126	+9

Coversheet

Housing and Contract Updates

Section:	III. President's Report
Item:	D. Housing and Contract Updates
Purpose:	Discuss
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	April Board Slide - Housing Occupancy.pdf



FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

HOUSING AND CONTRACT UPDATES **BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT** APRIL 17, 2025

OCCUPANCY

- **Spring 2025 Occupancy: 919**
- **Planning for Fall 2025 (Numbers as of Thursday, April 3):**
 - **577 current students selected housing for Fall 2025**
 - **Increased interest from students seeking to live on campus this fall**
 - **79 completed applications for new and transfer students to live on campus, well ahead of this time last year**
 - **15 current commuter students have begun process to reside on campus next year.**

Coversheet

Student Trustee Report

Section:	IV. Student Trustee Report
Item:	A. Student Trustee Report
Purpose:	FYI
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Student Trustee Report.pdf

Student Trustee Report - April 17th Board of Trustees Meeting

Good afternoon everyone,

Since our last meeting, I have had the opportunity to meet with some more offices to help update you all on what is happening on our campus.

Commuter Affairs

First off, I met with Shane Franzen on behalf of Commuter Affairs to discuss any updates on our commuters and how they can be further supported. One thing that the Office of Student Development and the Student Government Association has been considering is if moving our times of club programming earlier would positively impact our commuter students and increase overall engagement. Currently, my main focus with supporting commuter students is figuring out what they would like to get out of Fitchburg State from *their* commuter perspective and how we, as an institution, could further support them with their success in higher education.

After many efforts to speak with our commuters, Shane and I have determined that hosting events in the commuter parking lots is the most accessible way to reach them, and plan to keep hosting events like these to gain this commuter perspective on campus.

The Falcon Bazaar

I also met with Shane Franzen to discuss our Falcon Bazaar, our university food pantry that students are allowed to come into and grab some food if they ever need it. As there has been an increased amount of students entering the Falcon Bazaar to grab food, the Falcon Bazaar has been separated from the Clothing Closet and now has its own room, on the G-Level floor of the Hammond Building.

It is important to note that we do not ask students any personal information like their name or their situation. We only ask for their One Cards to be swiped to keep track of how much food is being taken and how many people need the Falcon Bazaar. Last year, the Falcon Bazaar had a total of 428 One Card swipes for the entirety of our last academic year. This year, we have had an increased total of 834 One Card swipes for the Falcon Bazaar, and this is only through the start of the academic year through the month of March.

Just as well, the Clothing Closet has also been a major success for our students in aiding them with professional clothing needs. During one of our career fairs in March, Career Services asked if the professional clothing closet could be brought out into the G Lobby for students to grab clothes before entering the fair. The Clothing Closet gave away 250 pieces of clothing that week, highlighting the importance of this service for our students.

Alumni Office

I also had the pleasure of meeting with Karina Calvo from our Alumni Office, and we were able to talk about the exciting event for our students tonight, the Spring Awards Ceremony.

At the ceremony tonight, there will be a total of 274 students receiving awards, and over \$250,000 being given out as well. With many of these generous scholarships being given out, the Alumni Office, working with many other offices across campus, have an important goal of making sure that all students who receive a scholarship write a thank you letter to send to their donors. The Student Government Association has hopes to uplift this goal by creating social media posts and other forms of PR to notify students to complete this task.

Another exciting aspect of this ceremony is how it has been renamed from “Convocation” to “Spring Awards Ceremony.” Convocation will now be held in the Fall Semester and will be held to serve as a new tradition for incoming Fitchburg State University Students. I encourage you all to attend this event tonight, as it is an event that highlights the student success happening on our campus.

Student Government Association

The Student Government Association has just finished up their election process and has determined who the new Executive Board will be. I want to give a congratulations to our newly elected Executive Board members: Michael Burns, SGA President, _____, SGA Vice President, _____ SGA Treasurer, _____, SGA Secretary, and myself as Student Trustee.

I want to note that this is the first time in seven years that the Student Government Association elections have been contested, which goes to show the growth that we have achieved this year as an organization.

Undergraduate Research Conference

I was also able to meet with Dr. Zachary Miner, who was able to help me gather some useful information for you all in regards to the Undergraduate Research Conference happening today. After requesting Dr. Miner’s help with presenting this information to you, he was able to offer me an official write up for you all that covers what the Undergraduate Research Conference is hoping to accomplish this year.

“As you may already know, this is the sixteenth annual undergraduate research conference. For this year we have yet again expanded the formats in which students can present by adding the "Lightning Talks" option. This new mode of presentation is quick - each presentation is less than 5 minutes total, and can use a maximum of 3 slides - and is intended for short presentations on high impact practices including internships, capstone experiences, service-learning, and study abroad. We're excited to see what students do with this new format, which we think will continue to expand as students and professors become familiar with it. We've already been in contact with two different departments who are considering requiring every student who does an internship to present a lightning talk at a future conference, So that's a really exciting area of growth.

But, our more traditional opportunities continue to be successful as well. Posters, oral presentations, and the Creative Writing Showcase have always been the center of the conference and they continue to be. But the committee has been having some exciting discussions with various departments about the ways in which the event is changing from a more traditional "research conference" to an event that showcases all of the amazing work.- scholarly, creative, professional, etc. - that students do here on campus. So, we encourage the trustees to return for next year's event - or watch [our website](#) - to see all the changes we have in store.”

Here's the lineup for this year:

Posters: 59

Oral Presentations: 21

Lightning Talks: 6

Creative Writing: 5

Visual Arts: 2

Roundtables: 1

Undergraduate Day Students

After speaking with some professors and other administrators, it has come to my attention that in some areas of study, there has been a lack of engagement with our students in classes. As this has always been a struggle, it seems that more professors are facing the challenges of feeling connected with their students and creating a higher level of engagement.

Upon my reelection as Student Trustee, I hope to tackle the struggle of the disconnect between our students and professors. I plan to encourage students to voice their concerns in the classroom, and ask them what they truly want out of their classes here at Fitchburg State University.

Upon my own experience, I believe that the \$5 meal plan for our faculty and staff has been very beneficial towards the start of forming connections between faculty, staff, and students. I always enjoy walking by my professors or administrators that I meet with and being able to say hello in an informal setting, creating a welcoming environment for our students.

Coversheet

Presented by Dr. Hodge/Heidi Swift

Section:	VIII. Budget Report/Updates
Item:	A. Presented by Dr. Hodge/Heidi Swift
Purpose:	Discuss
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	FY25 BOT 4.9.25.pdf



	FY 2025 Working Budget	FY 2025 Actuals Qtr 2	% of Spend
REVENUE			
State Maintenance	44,430,193	27,994,703	63.01%
Fringe Total Costs	19,296,347	12,160,899	63.02%
State Funded Fringe Benefits	(19,296,347)	(12,160,899)	63.02%
Collective Bargaining Funds	-	-	0.00%
Performance Funding	-	-	0.00%
Total State Revenue	44,430,193	27,994,703	63.01%
Tuition/ Non state Support	875,000	-	0.00%
Tuition/ Out of State Undergraduate	1,375,000	1,295,534	94.22%
Total Tuition	2,250,000	1,295,534	57.58%
UG Day Division Fees	20,942,774	18,300,464	87.38%
Capital Debt Fee	4,561,850	3,878,192	85.01%
Ed Serv Fee Transfer (SGOCE/AP)	6,490,098	3,419,482	52.69%
Total Fees	31,994,722	25,598,138	80.01%
Net Tuition & Fees	34,244,722	26,893,672	78.53%
Sales & Service Income/Other	2,191,100	1,205,335	55.01%
Investments -Dividends/Interest	1,402,500	782,079	55.76%
Grants	1,896,181	1,952,441	102.97%
Dorm Authority - Housing	9,419,856	9,207,830	97.75%
Food Services	3,540,000	3,844,609	108.60%
Reserve from Fund Balance	2,442,190		0.00%
Sch of Grad and Continuing Educ	10,900,190	6,577,446	60.34%
Center for Professional Studies	571,011	410,936	71.97%
Accelerated Programs	10,397,415	6,942,820	66.77%
Ed Service Fee xfr to University	(6,490,098)	(3,419,482)	52.69%
Total Operating Revenue	\$ 114,945,260	\$ 82,392,389	71.68%
EXPENDITURES			
Personnel Costs (Day)	52,405,482	21,944,333	41.87%
Operations (Day)	23,207,725	12,034,959	51.86%
Utilities	5,051,706	1,755,621	34.75%
Housing	10,870,497	3,168,431	29.15%
Utilities	1,190,700	590,235	49.57%
Food Service	3,370,000	1,497,904	44.45%
Capital (Operations-Funded)	5,000,000	1,660,301	33.21%
School of Graduate Online	6,290,462	3,236,371	51.45%
Center for Professional Studies	570,917	269,938	47.28%
Accelerated Programs	6,441,367	3,293,498	51.13%
Operating Budget Expenses	\$ 114,398,856	\$ 49,451,591	43.23%
NET TOTAL	\$ 546,404	\$ 32,940,798	